THE COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

Volume XIII — New York, Wednesday, November 5, 1930 — Number 1

EDITORIAL BOARD
MICHAEL WILLIAMS, Editor
GEORGE N. SHUSTER, Managing Editor
MARY KOLARS, Assistant Editor
FREDERIC THOMPSON, Assistant Editor

JOHN F. McCORMICK, Business Manager

EDITORIAL COUNCIL
CARLTON J. H. HAYES
T. LAWRASON RIGGS
RICHARD DANA SKINNER
JAMES J. WALSH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Facing the Facts 1
Week by Week 2
Intemperance of Prohibition 5
New Hope in Porto Rico ..... Shaemas O'Sheel 7
Places and Persons ..... Cuthbert Wright 10
In Time of Autumn Rains *(verse)* ..... David Morton 12
Denaturing the Middle Ages ..... Harvey Wickham 13
Art in Bread and Butter ..... Louise Owen 16
San Francisco Celebrates ..... James J. Walsh 17
Communications 18
The Play and Screen ..... Richard Dana Skinner 20
Salutation *(verse)* ..... William Cummings 21
Books ..... Catherine Radziwill, Michael Williams, John Gilland Brunini, William Franklin Sands, John Cavanaugh, Frederic Thompson, Grenville Vernon 22

Published weekly and copyrighted 1930, in the United States by the Calvert Publishing Corporation, Grand Central Terminal, New York, N. Y. United States: $5.00; Foreign: $6.00; Canada: $5.50. Single Copies: $.10.

FACING THE FACTS

SOMETHING dangerously akin to a complete confusion of mind is apt to threaten even the most thoughtful readers today, in face of the flood of conflicting opinions and reports concerning the economic situation of the country. Indeed, it might almost be said that one of the things which modern civilization has considered to be among the most useful of its instruments, namely, its system for communicating news and views, has grown to such proportions of speed and multiplicity as to have well nigh defeated its own purpose. Who except a few people have the time to read more than a fragmentary part of the articles, interviews, speeches, editorial opinions, statements, reports, pamphlets and books dealing with our present crisis? Who is able to form reasonable views when overwhelmed by the sheer mass of material offered for study, and bewildered by the apparently hopeless conflict between the proposed remedies? Even some of the most expert writers on economics are now frankly confessing their inability to see their way through the jungle of thorny problems which confront them. And this applies to problems of alleviation as well as to problems of how to effect a fundamental cure of our economic ills. For example, is it well to agree with those who confidently proclaim the virtues of a determined and highly practical type of "optimism"? Should we assent to those who say that the current depression is chiefly psychological and that it can be done away with by refusing to believe in it? Should we prove our faith in this doctrine by rushing out and buying goods, so that more goods may be sold—so that more may be made—so that more wages may be paid out to still other people, and the endless chain of production and disposal of goods may go merrily on? Or should we pay heed to the preachers of thrift? Should we save instead of spend?

That needless fright is a bad thing under present circumstances, is undoubtedly true. That confidence, courage, hopefulness and determination to find a way out of our problems constitute a practical program, is also unquestionable. But mind-cure systems do not work when applied to organic diseases. Functional disturbances may yield to hopeful thoughts, or die away apparently without result when the attention is turned from them. Sometimes, however, this is a highly dangerous system to follow. Functional disturbances and minor symptoms of physical trouble, if not dealt with promptly, may turn out to be grave warnings of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the approach if not yet the presence of organic disease. Neglecting such symptoms may be the worst of all possible methods of dealing with them. And this thought applies as well to the economic situation. For the sake of alleviating the present depression, it may be sound tactics to stimulate public confidence, to buoy up cheerfulness and courage; but a strict duty also rests upon those who guide and control society to probe to the bottom and to discover the fundamental causes of our economic ills, and then to apply the most enlightened intelligence available to reconstructive remedies.

Necessarily, in any such effort, there will be a strenuous struggle between various schools of thought, and to choose among them will be a matter of difficulty; but whatever may be doubtful or debatable, there is one thing which Catholics at least cannot question—and that is, that no economic remedy can work unless it places moral and ethical factors foremost, and merely material factors secondary. Fortunately, Catholics are far from being solitary in their insistence upon this fact. The revolt from the materialistic dogmas of economics has been widespread. There is a readiness at least to listen to principles which are grounded upon spiritual and moral grounds. And we are not left unguided as to the precise nature of these ethical principles, nor as to how some of the most important of them may be applied. Americans have the "Pastoral Letter" of their bishops, issued in 1919, and also the "Reconstruction Program," published at the same time by a special committee of the hierarchy. Both these documents were given keen and wide attention at the time they were published. Clubs were formed by the National Catholic Welfare Conference to study them thoroughly. How far this study has succeeded in developing a Catholic consciousness of social and economic problems, we are not in a position to judge: but our guess would be that it has not gone very far as yet. And if ever there was a time favorable for such study, it is the present. We have been shaken out of our complacent acceptance of things as they were. The pressure of realities compells a revaluation of many ideas hitherto accepted or rejected unthinkingly.

As one of the bishops that issued the report said at the time: "How ever much men may differ about certain minor details contained in the program, it is based upon the immutable principles of justice and charity which the Church holds, has held and will ever hold. The duty of the Universal Church is to instruct the citizens of each state in the application of these principles. . . . To us it appeared that the United States was willing to listen to representatives of the Church which throughout all the ages has striven not only to protect the workman but to further his progress in all ways consistent with Christian morality. In this you have the reason why the bishops have brought forth once again the old, old principles of justice which the Church is bound to preserve . . ."

WEEK BY WEEK

THE DRAMATIC suddenness with which the revolution in Brazil succeeded has at least one great merit to recommend it to a world grown weary of war, for it has apparently averted what threatened to become the most disastrous civil war ever waged on American soil, with the exception of our own war between the Northern and Southern states. It bears out what E. R. Pineda wrote in one of our recent issues. The Brazilian "revolution," like so many such affairs in Latin America, was really a "violent election," based on personal issues in which, as usual, political corruption was involved. The Brazilian overturn also gives a new point to Mr. Pineda's advice that the State Department should remember Gilbert and Sullivan's song:

Brazilian Election

> The House of Lords throughout the war
> Did nothing in particular
> And did it very well.

IN ADDITION, Mr. Pineda specifically recommended a hands-off policy. The State Department, however, by disregarding such a policy, and definitely supporting the administration now in the discard, seems to have wagered on the wrong horse with the usual result of such bad bets—the loss of the cash which American trade may suffer in consequence of losing favor with the incoming government of Brazil, Great Britain standing to win because of its neutrality between the warring factions. However, the United States had been steadily gaining business in Brazil, and no doubt its natural advantages in the South American field—the proximity of its markets, and its ability to supply quickly the goods most in demand—will soon regain any disadvantage occasioned by the State Department's action. The episode proves again what THE COMMONWEAL has often pointed out, namely, that both the government and the press seem to be badly informed on South American affairs.

WHAT is the real answer to the Palestinian riddle? We do not mean merely the answer that this present moment makes inevitable, but the ultimate answer of reason and justice. Will it ultimately be possible for Great Britain, the mandatory power, to underwrite the aspiration for a Jewish national home, as she certainly professed her intention of doing in the Balfour Declaration, and at the same time to regard the legitimate wishes and demands of the Arabs, who are in a majority of something like five to one in the Holy Land? Or will the Labor government's recently issued statement of Palestinian policy, which repudiates the declaration in everything but words, stand perforce as Britain's final decision in the matter? We have expressed before this our sense of the tragic *impasse* in Palestine. The peculiar need of the Jews for a geographical home, the peculiar his-

Has Zionism Failed?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

toric and spiritual appropriateness of locating that home in Palestine, are beyond question. Beyond question, too, are the facts of the solemn invitation and guarantee extended to the Jewish race by the Balfour document, and that race's overwhelming response in dollars and men. On the other hand, the resentment of the Palestinian Arabs at what they feel to be an alien invasion, is as little to be conjured away; and when we consider the homogeneity of the whole Moslem body, and the 75,000,000 Indian Mohammedans who at any moment may take up actively the cause of their Arabian coreligionists, we can understand Britain's present minimizing of her undertaking.

OF COURSE any intention of repudiating the declaration is officially denied. What Mr. MacDonald's government (led by Lord Passfield, and, it is said, against the private wishes of Mr. MacDonald himself) has done is to confirm for an indefinite period the ban which was tentatively placed several months ago upon further Jewish immigration into the Holy Land. The formal reason given is the inability of the country to absorb more colonists at present; the strong implication is that the colonists are an exploiting body, with the native Arabs as the exploited. Jewish leaders must have foreseen this decision from the first, but their indignation is, understandably, very great. They deny the specific economic criticism—a position which we can neither attack nor share—and they are aroused at the complete stoppage of all their plans and expansive activities. Every shade of Jewish opinion seems involved. Those to whom Zionism is a mystical ideal, to be incorporated in a political state, and those whose first allegiance is elsewhere, but who see in the Holy Land a possible asylum for their harried and suffering brethren in eastern Europe, have alike joined in the protest. It has prompted the resignation of two of the leading Jews of our time, the Zionist Dr. Weizmann, former head of the world movement, and the non-Zionist Felix Warburg, who was chairman of the Jewish Agency. It has led to the organization of campaigns for publicity and appeal, directed at the conscience of the world. What the final response will be cannot be predicted—as we began by saying. There are many in the camp of General Jan Smuts, who solemnly reminds his central government that a promise is a promise. Will they be stronger than those following Lord Passfield, to whom a too difficult promise can simply be canceled?

Aiding the Jobless

EVEN in the midst of the most abundant social prosperity, the Catholic Church must bear a constant burden of dealing with unemployment relief work and many other forms of social service for which the good old name of "the corporal works of mercy" once was amply descriptive. The demands upon parish funds, and not only parish funds but the personal interest and time of pastors and their assistants, and also of the Saint Vincent de Paul societies and other organizations, go on all the time, although, of course, rarely so strenuously as the present crisis demands. For "prosperity" is the most relative of terms. At the height of boom times, there will be numerous men and women, who, without any fault of their own, will be turned out of their jobs or their positions because of many causes quite beyond their control: such as business failure on the part of their employers, lack of work in a particular trade or industry while other lines are thriving, the reduction of workers by the sudden coming of lavor-saving devices, and innumerable other reasons.

THIS social service work for the most part goes on under the surface and rarely comes to public attention; except when it is revealed by some picturesque or unusual fact, like the sudden swelling of the stream of "down-and-outs" who daily visit the Franciscan church in Thirty-first Street, New York, which has grown from a few hundred a day to nearly a thousand, and to whom the Franciscans can now only dispense a nickel to each applicant in the bread line. The recommendations made recently at the Kansas City convention of the National Council of Catholic Men, by Father McGowan of the Department of Social Action, point the way to relief action of a more fundamental type, which promises to do something at least to relieve the strain which is now resting so heavily upon most Catholic pastors. His principal recommendations were: first, the appointment of permanent parish or diocesan committees to do everything possible locally to promote construction or other work-creating jobs; second, district conferences to study conditions peculiar to the respective districts and to promote enterprises calculated to provide work. While such committees or conferences could aid in showing that city, school or county officials might undertake building projects, the church committees could also encourage the building of schools, hospitals and churches. While hopefully looking forward to alleviations, if not solutions, of the fundamental causes of the present unemployment crisis, it is obvious that the first duty is that of the immediate relief of the innocent victims of the grim crisis now upon society.

Speaking of Murder

"SINS were sins and murders were murders in those days. Mysteries, shootings, hangings—such glorious fun!" With these words the distinguished, and in many ways eminently respectable publishing house of Frederick A. Stokes announces in a large advertisement the publication of a new book, "Sins of New York," by the genial sports writer, Mr. Ed Van Every. Allowing for the fact that the book is more or less of a "spoof," based on pictures and excerpts from the old *Police Gazette*, we are moved again to consider the repeated warnings from qualified commentators on the shocking let-down in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standards of what is being offered to the public as entertainment. In so far as we know them, we are sure the members of the firm of Stokes and Company would not consider sins, murders, shootings and hangings among their immediate families or friends, such glorious fun! We imagine they frown as they read of these things in the daily paper, and at their clubs speak disapprovingly of the increasing liberties the lower classes allow themselves. Yet they are ready to make a Roman circus of virtue if there is a dollar's profit in it. Who can wonder at the increase in crime today when such unquestioned gentlemen can employ all the resources at their command to spread the idea that murders and hangings are pleasantries?

Too Warlike

UP-STATE New Yorkers were treated to what was claimed to be the first political campaigning by airplane. The Assistant Secretary of War, F. Trubee Davison, in a ten-passenger Sikorsky amphibian was this self-styled inaugurator. Captain Ira C. Eaker, crack army flier, was the pilot. We seriously doubt the exactness of Mr. Davison's claim, which was quoted by the New York *Times*. We cannot recall cases of political campaigners using the airplane before this, but we feel sure there must have been instances of it. Politicians are not slow as a rule to adopt the spectacular to draw attention to their cause whether or not the stunt has any relevance to serious matters of state, so that it does not seem likely that they would have passed up the airplane for so long. What struck us as inappropriate in the present instance, was that a political campaigner, an assistant secretary of the War Department, should employ a United States army officer as his pilot. To be sure, Captain Eaker was on "special" leave, so that the matter was officially correct. To the spirit of our American institutions, however, if not to the letter of the law, it seems an offensive and potentially dangerous precedent. We feel sure that the officers of the army and navy will silently and heartfeltly concur with us in this, as well as the average citizen who resents the use of the army and navy in the making of purely political gestures.

Christian Education

BASING its work entirely on the Pope's encyclical letter on the "Christian Education of Youth," the Department of Education of the National Catholic Welfare Conference has prepared a program for American Education Week in the Catholic schools, from November 10 to 16. The great fundamentals are proposed for study: the meaning of Christian education; the part played by the Church; the all-important position of the family; the relations of the state to the Catholic school, and of the school to the state; the liturgy; the Christian teacher; and, bringing all subjects to a common ground, education and Catholic action. Reading lists are suggested under each topic, and for each topic also there is an appropriate and inspiring motto from the Holy Father's letter. The value of a special week of concentration on the guiding and directing principles of education is obvious. Through addresses and assemblies for study and discussion, these principles are laid hold upon with fresh interest and deeper understanding. It is to be hoped that the success of previous observances of this special week of intensive devotion to the greatest of all great works, that of Christian education, will be outdone this year.

Crusaders of Mercy

THE part taken by the Margaret Brent Civic Guild, a state-wide organization of Catholic women of Massachusetts, and a special committee of Catholic laymen, coöperating with other humanitarian groups, to do away with the use of the steel trap in Massachusetts, is not only commendable and noteworthy in itself, but is also an incident which may well point the way to a wider and more consistent participation on the part of Catholic groups in other movements intended for the common good. The question of abolishing the use of the steel trap, which inflicts such horrible suffering upon wild animals wherever it is used will come before the voters of Massachusetts in November. A special circular is being distributed, setting forth the principles taught by the Catholic Church to guide its members on such matters, and it may well have a useful effect upon many others than Catholics. Eminent Catholic philosophers and theologians are quoted to show what an act of essential sinfulness is cruelty to animals, and to indicate the inevitable evil effect of such conduct on those who practise it.

IN A LETTER sent to Catholic voters by the Anti-Steel-Trap League, written by Mr. James F. Desmond, it is pointed out that "by the circulation of the pamphlet and by bringing the matter directly before the various Catholic organizations, it is hoped that the Catholic laity will be aroused to the point where they will not only see the justice and merits of the proposed humane trapping law, but that they will also see the advantage of meeting their non-Catholic fellow-citizens on this common ground of approach to a better understanding. The Catholic Church at the present time is endeavoring to reach the non-Catholic world with its message and doctrinal principles through every medium available and we feel that by making known the Church's true position on questions of a humane nature that we will to that extent help to dissipate many erroneous beliefs now existing in the minds of thousands of well-disposed but misinformed non-Catholics." We earnestly hope that the Margaret Brent Civic League, and the Catholic laymen of Massachusetts, will succeed not only in their immediate object, but also in the wider work which is indicated by such movements.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WE CANNOT quite understand why the most cogent protests against advanced educational theory which we have come across should be uttered by women. In the past few months we have singled out as especially notable in the mass of pedagogical comment that is a feature of the day, the salutary strictures of a female novelist and a female teacher. The current *Harper's* brings a third shrewdly reasoned query as to the all-wisdom of the latest educational findings, from the pen of Mrs. Alice Beale Parsons. Like the other two critics mentioned above, Mrs. Parsons has developed to the point of wanting children to be let alone more than they are in those expensive advanced and "model" schools which incorporate all the newest psychology and psychiatry. But she carries their position further. Favoring, as they do, both uninvaded leisure in which a child may really play, and that worse heresy, solitude in which he may escape the constant necessity for group adjustment, she sees that the only way to promote these ideals is to give him the safeguard of old-fashioned authority.

Authority for Children

MRS. PARSON'S point is that children who are left to work out their educational salvation with the minimum of interference from their teachers, inevitably fall under the worse tyranny of their own leaders. "Somebody runs every gang," as Mrs. Parsons has sagely observed, and one real objection to a gang of self-directed youngsters is that it is not self-directed; it is directed, and it follows with all the child's barbarian fanaticism of conformity, that member or those members who can impose their tastes and their will. The protecting and compensating influence of authority is needed, to keep specific personal occupations and personal liberties within the educational scheme. To this we ourselves would add a point, more general but not, we think, less important. It is this: even if children directed themselves, by external tests, wisely and liberally, they should not be allowed to direct themselves wholly. It curtails their real freedom, which is the freedom proper to children, giving them an unchildish responsibility that is spiritually exhausting.

NEWS that the International Society for the Rejuvenation of Catholic Sacred Music, which was organized at Frankfort-on-the-Main, Germany, three years ago, has been having its first convention in the city of its birth during the last week of October, will not only be of interest to all who are concerned in the revival of liturgical music, but is also a much-needed reminder that in spite of the disturbed political and economic conditions of Germany, the ordinary currents of cultural life are still proceeding with their beneficent work. Incidentally, the same consoling fact is true of a good many other countries, our own included. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Fuchs, the President of the Rhinelands, and Dr. Bruening, an eminent banker of Cologne, with Professor Joseph Haas of Munich at the head of the music committee, a notable program was carried out by well-known choral societies from a large number of German cities. The performances included festival Masses, music for various church devotions, study concerts, a radio hour and representative concerts in which the best works of the mediaeval and the Renaissance periods were performd, in addition to many new works by contemporary composers. France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Spain and the United States sent original compositions. The contributions from the United States were from the pen of Dr. N. J. Elsenheimer, of New York, who is also the American representative of the society. His Mass in E Flat for organ and mixed voices, and his motet, *Adore Te Devote,* dedicated to Cardinal Hayes, were chosen to exemplify contemporary American liturgical music.

Sacred Music

INTEMPERANCE OF PROHIBITION

EIGHT hundred and seventy-six million gallons of intoxicating liquors were consumed by the American people during the past year, according to the official estimates of the Federal Prohibition Bureau. It has been pointed out that this is seven gallons per person. Allowing that this nation were even equably divided in the matter of practising, as well as preaching, total abstinence, and we would have the picture of fourteen gallons a year for every indulging citizen. That is a gallon a month per person, and an extra two gallons for the Fourth of July.

These figures are impressive enough, and they are obviously conservative, issuing from such a source. The Association against the Prohibition Amendment gives other figures, after a year and a half of study and research by statisticians. The impartial observer, however, may assume that with the best will in the world these statisticians, when in doubt, decided in favor of the drinking man, and the truth lies somewhere between the statements of the bureau and the association.

But it is interesting to note that the Prohibition Bureau's estimates for the amount of wine consumed are eight and one-half millions of gallons above the estimates of the anti-prohibition association. Parenthetically, before we get on to the serious considerations that these revelations must lead us to, we may wonder whether the liberal gesture of the federal bureau in the instance of wine were not motivated by politeness toward the grape growers of California. The recent newspaper disclosures of how such matters cannot escape political and human equations, would seem to make the assumption not unreasonable. As a further smile toward the vintners of the great state which has given us the coiner of the phrase, "the noble experiment," Colonel Amos Woodcock, head of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Federal Prohibition Bureau, announces, that he thinks makers of home-made wine are within the law, while Chairman Legge of the Federal Farm Board is reported by the New York *Times* to have "indulged in a hearty laugh" when informed that the Farm Board was probably helping the California grape growers in their campaign to encourage wine-making at home by granting a large loan to be used to process surplus juice grapes for home consumption. Concurrently *Produce News,* trade organ of the vintners, declares: "There will be no authorized federal interference with consumers who desire to purchase grapes for the home manufacture and consumption of fruit juices. Ample protection will be afforded in all cases where necessary. Regional representatives will be available to handle such cases *in coöperation* with the state and federal governments." (The italics are our own.)

But leaving these signs, these straws in the wind, let us return to the present facts of the liquor consumption. An official estimate of 876,000,000 gallons of intoxicating liquors, and an unofficial estimate of 1,110,000,000 of gallons, seems rather more than a gesture of defiance. That is, the facts which must be somewhere between these two partizan estimates are more than a gesture. They ought to lead even the most convinced prohibitionists to consider whether after all the present law, passed when 2,000,000 men were in uniform to fight for their country and thereby deprived of their vote, is not an unworkable way of tackling the estimable cause of temperance, and whether it is not defeating the principles of representative government on which this country is founded.

Let the economists who with more zeal than proof assert that prohibition is of such great economic advantages to the country, consider the colossal sums involved in the present experiment. The Association against the Prohibition Amendment estimates that $2,800,000,000 are spent yearly on liquor. Considering it even as an approximation, the sum is sufficiently large that any probable error leaves the import of it unshaken. This amount was spent without any of it coming back to the people in the form of government revenue. On the contrary, $32,700,000 were spent in the alleged enforcing of the federal law for prohibition. Added to this huge sum coming out of the harassed taxpayers' pockets to hire snoopers who, to get evidence, themselves violate the law and who incite violations of it by others by patronizing speakeasies, night clubs and bootleggers, there is a further tax of an inestimable sum resulting from the actions in the courts: rents, the pay of judges, the added legal machinery required, and the obstructing of the normal functions of law enforcement. In the same week that the above estimates of liquor consumption in the United States made news, Attorney-General Mitchell revealed, in commenting on Chief Justice Hughes's report on the congestion in the federal courts, that of the 35,000 criminal cases pending trial at the end of last June, 20,000 were under the national prohibition act. Consider not only the cost of these 20,000 cases which merely represent the overflow, the business pending, but also the cost to the private citizens who are witnesses, or plaintiffs paying lawyers' fees, or defendants under the same necessity, who cannot get speedy justice by reason of the overwhelming proportion of prohibition cases. Further, besides the vast sums directly spent on the flow of liquor, are the sums spent by the various agencies, associations and clubs for and against the present methods, roughly estimated to amount to $2,000,000 a year in contributed and expended funds by the two main protagonists alone, and actually running to much more when all the unpaid activities of individuals drawing their subsistence and expenses from other sources are taken into consideration.

What is the social importance of these outlays? The impoverishment of our citizens by the diverting of such large amounts from productive uses, and the setting of them one against the other. But above all is the importance of the fact that under the present system, every dollar of the sum spent on liquor, is a dollar spent on subsidizing violation of law. Let the prohibitionists consider this from the point of view of fact, not of some ultimate theory. Nearly three billion dollars a year is spent in weakening respect for law. It is sustaining and training organized lawbreakers, whose offenses may be confined to the particular branch of law-breaking under consideration, but whose attitude toward the law in general must be impaired.

Great as were the abuses under the old system of the open saloon and the virtually unrestrained and unsupervised consumption of liquor, it is certainly time for the earnest citizen to consider whether the abuses under the present system are not worse, whether they do not involve an insidious eating away of the foundations of sane and peaceful government.

Immediately let it be said that of course we do not advocate the return of the saloon. But we do believe the ostrich attitude of the defenders of the present system of federal prohibition is ridiculous and invites, and is due to receive, a resounding whack. The present methods were devised with an arbitrariness and lack of humor that made them foredoomed to failure and the evoking of bitterness. Though the intemperate abstainers become autointoxicated by their own spleen when there is evidence that they were less than wise in forcing prohibition on the nation, though they resort to every rudeness rather than admit failure, there are—besides the liberalizing signs that we have alluded to in the matter of home-brewing, besides the recently renewed demand of the American Federation of Labor that the workingman be allowed to enjoy 2.75 percent beer in other surrounding than the speakeasy and the cellar—there are many indications for the citizen appalled by the extent of the corruption in present methods that this national shame shall presently be solved in a temperate attitude.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW HOPE IN PORTO RICO

By SHAEMAS O'SHEEL

Although economic distress within the continental area of the United States is demanding much attention, the situation in Porto Rico, part of the national domains, should not be neglected—and, as this article is a proof, under Porto Rico's new governor, it is not likely that Americans will be permitted to forget that fact. The energy traditional in the Roosevelt family is being applied to the problems described below, and constructive intelligence accompanies the energy. Catholics will be particularly interested in this account of Porto Rico, most of whose inhabitants are Catholics.—THE EDITORS.

MOST Americans know, in a vague way, that Porto Rico is somewhere in the Caribbean, off our southern coasts. Short of a hurricane, little news from the island trickles into our press. The volume of such news, however, is now increasing. Porto Rico has a new kind of governor. His name is Theodore Roosevelt.

Today the people of the island have taken fresh hope because their affairs are being attended to, and their needs are being called to the attention of the American people, by a young man who in one direction exercises salient executive talents, penetrating quickly to the core of their problems, cutting gordian knots of long standing, laying foundations for a new economic future; while in an equally important direction he wins their confidence by a man-to-man approach marked by qualities of heart and sensitive consideration for their pride all too seldom vouchsafed a people in tutelage.

The people of Porto Rico need such an advocate. They are American citizens, yet they are helpless to gain their ends by the political means open to the people of continental United States. "They live or die by our acts or omissions," as their new governor puts it. We have given them a large measure of political freedom; but Colonel Roosevelt reminds us that in the modern world economic facts are more important than political forms, and self-rule will not eradicate disease, poverty and ignorance while economic dependence fastens upon a people the conditions which breed these evils. Colonel Roosevelt does not talk glittering generalities nor the pompous language of administrative abstractions. He tells instead about little children dying of undernourishment, and how to save them; of diseases sapping the strength of a splendid people, and how to eradicate them; of an unbalanced economy, and how to right it.

Porto Rico's problems are rooted, in the first place, in the density of its population. On an island little more than one hundred by thirty-five miles in size, there are crowded approximately 1,543,000 people, or an average of 428 to the square mile. This is one of the highest rates of density in the world. If ever a situation demanded intensive agricultural cultivation, supported by varied industry, it is demanded here. But, the colonel points out, Porto Rico has neither intensive agriculture nor varied industry; instead, it has virtually a one-crop and one-industry situation. From this flows poverty, with its concommitants of ignorance, disease, hopelessness. These, we are reminded, are progressive evils; and while we did not implant them, after thirty years of American rule they are in some ways worse than ever. The death rate from tuberculosis is the highest in the Western Hemisphere, and four and one-half times the like rate in continental United States. Not only are there 35,000 islanders suffering from tuberculosis; there are 200,000 malaria cases, and 600,000 afflicted with hookworm. Other intestinal parasites also lower the vitality and efficiency of a people, nearly two-thirds of whom are permanently ill.

What touches the governor's indignation and sympathy most of all is the appalling infant mortality rate. In the fiscal year 1928-1929 this was 179 per 1,000, two and one-half times the rate in continental United States. It meant that of every 100 children born, eighteen never reached the age of one year. In the fiscal year 1929-1930, this rate has been reduced, as we shall see, but it is still pitiably high.

It is not the climate that is responsible for these conditions. With a moderate temperature varying little throughout the year, abundance of sunshine and trade winds blowing most of the time, Colonel Roosevelt believes that Porto Rico should actually be a health resort. He lays these conditions at the door of the economic system by which 60 percent of the population are without gainful employment or useful occupation a large part of the year. This, too, is why 60 percent of the children of school age are undernourished. Ignorance is added to poverty and malnutrition in making these people the victims of disease.

In the old days the best lands in Porto Rico were parceled out among a planter aristocracy, some of whom lived in Porto Rico, while too many others lived at ease in Spain on the toil of their peons. It was a bad system—but what followed under American rule is little better. The old estates have now become the property, for the most part, of big American sugar companies. The peon's destiny is now in the hands not of aristocracy, but of organized capital. In the old days coffee was the chief Porto Rican crop. It was the highest grade coffee in the world; it brought the grower $.30 a pound. Then came one of the devastating cyclones from which the island periodically suffers, and after that blow Porto Rican coffee, faced by high American tariffs and cheap and abundant Brazilian coffee, could never come back. Sugar became the major island crop. Today four big American

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

companies control over half of the sugar production. The sugar companies are not necessarily guilty of deliberately harsh exploitation. Leavening the almost automatically impersonal operations of industry by humane considerations is a slow process anywhere. The companies made their investment and had to seek their profits in a notoriously unstable world market. Colonel Roosevelt told me that, although all the sugar *centrals* lost money last year, they all ordered the same wages paid this year. He believes that, all things considered, the wages the companies have been offering, starting at $.80 to $1.00 a day for the lowest class labor, are fair; for the pay which a skilled American mechanic would scorn for an hour's work is, when earned by a Porto Rican peon for a day's labor, unprecedented prosperity. Nevertheless a system under which even an apparently fair wage keeps the people in dire poverty, without, moreover, assuring a profit to capital, is certainly defective.

Colonel Roosevelt sketched for me the workings of the one-crop system. The sugar season lasts from January to the end of June. During that time the cane is grown, cut, brought to the mills and converted into brown sugar which is sent to refineries in the United States. From the end of June to January the majority of the people have no employment, no income. The situation would be bettered if the final refining operations were carried out in Porto Rico. At present there is only one small refinery on the island. The governor would like to see more; for then, when the local crop was exhausted, raw sugar could be imported to keep the refineries busy. The dominating industry would then at least provide all-year-round employment. But Colonel Roosevelt is insistent that Porto Rico must be freed from its dependence on sugar. "Absentee landlordism," he said, "is the worst of economic curses; but the independent farmer is the salt of the earth in any land."

An important part of the new policy in Porto Rico, therefore, is to put people back on the land, on small farms, and then to teach them how to win a better living from the soil. There are plenty of small farmers squatting back in the hills now, but their condition is miserable enough. They live in huts, often made of packing boxes, gasoline tins and other flotsam; they scratch the earth with primitive implements and to little effect. The Homestead Commission, charged with providing better holdings in the richer lowlands, had come to an impasse owing to the lack of government lands. At Colonel Roosevelt's instance, a bond issue has provided funds with which the commission is buying up farm lands and allotting them in holdings of from two and one-half to ten acres. The grantees will repay the government over a period of years. Small enough farms, certainly; but on them some tobacco can be grown and, more important, fruit and vegetables can be raised. Today the typical peon earns from $150 to $200 a year raising sugar for the *centrals*. He spends these miserable wages for rice, beans and codfish—all imported, and made expensive by tariffs. Dietetically, this is an unbalanced and scant ration; economically, it is a crazy system.

Yet Porto Rico will grow a variety of vegetables. The remedy for the peon's ills lies thus in large measure at his very doorstep. Colonel Roosevelt told me of the measures his government is taking to help the farmers get the most out of their holdings. These include agricultural advisers in every district and a number of demonstration farms. The agents, who go from farm to farm in their districts, are not theoretical agriculturalists but practical farmers. The demonstration farms are supplemented by small plots surrounding many of the 2,200 rural vocational schools. In these schools the academic curriculum is confined to reading, writing, arithmetic and English; beyond these essentials, the boys are taught such practical subjects as cobbling, carpentry and the effective cultivation of the school garden-plot; the girls learn cooking, sewing and embroidery. Finally, farm bureaus are being established on a coöperative basis with government aid, for the study of agricultural problems, the coöperative purchase of implements and seed and, it is to be hoped, the coöperative marketing of farm products.

I told the governor of a talk I had with an intelligent young Porto Rican who spoke appreciatively of the new agricultural program, but said that his people were too lazy to take advantage of it. He blazed in reply: "No, no, the people are not lazy—they are sick! It is not sloth—it is hookworm and malaria that make them slow to take advantage of our efforts. But we are making progress against these enemies." He sketched for me the strategy of the fight against disease. Slender as are the funds at the disposal of the insular government, it is planned to extend a chain of twenty health centers across the island; later there will be one in each of the thirty-five electoral districts. Each health unit will be in charge of a full-time doctor. Under him will be a personnel composed of visiting nurses, sanitary inspectors and social workers. The nurses will serve in the clinics maintained at the centers, and will also visit out-patients; the inspectors and social workers will be constantly on the move throughout their districts, bringing instruction, warning, help and solace; seeing that drinking water is not polluted; getting latrines away from the kitchen doors; directing improvements of houses built on damp ground or without adequate ventilation; watching the condition of perishable foods; instructing mothers in basic hygiene and care of the sick. These visitation services will be vastly extended by the program of attaching a social worker to each rural vocational school.

Utilizing a fund of $150,000 raised in the United States by the American Relief Association's Children's Fund, and the Golden Rule Foundation, an extensive program of lunches for school children has been put in effect—for thousands of children, the school lunch

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is the only adequate meal they get during the day—and milk stations have been established for the undernourished babies. As a result of less than a year's operation of these plans, the infant mortality rate, which as we saw stood at 179 per 1,000 in 1928-1929, was reduced in 1929-1930 to 133 per 1,000. Truly a work of mercy! The next problem ahead is the provision of more adequate hospital facilities. The insular sanitarium, municipal hospitals and private institutions together provide only 490 beds for tubercular cases—with 35,000 such cases on the island!

President Hoover responded quickly when these conditions were called to his attention, and arranged for a report on island conditions by the American Child Health Association. As a result of this, that association, and the Catholic Porto Rican Child Welfare Association, the American Relief Association, the Children's Fund, the American Social Hygiene Association, the National Tuberculosis Association, and the Porto Rico Child-Feeding Committee have formed a joint board under the name of the Porto Rico Child-Health Committee, which has announced its intention to raise $7,300,000, to be spent over a period of years in coördinated work along the lines indicated above.

The governor turned the conversation again to the economics of the situation. "If," he said, "we are to conquer disease, we must abolish hunger in Porto Rico—and that means we must abolish poverty." The island still bears the marks of the terrible tornado of September 13, 1928. This ill has been turned to good, inasmuch as it has moved the Congress at Washington to appropriate $1,000,000, with the virtual promise of as much more next year, for a program of rehabilitation of Porto Rican roads. This frees a like amount of insular funds for sanitary and educational uses, and provides much needed employment. But Colonel Roosevelt's vision of permanent economic betterment in the island is far-reaching. He summed it up in a phrase: "To bring Porto Rico within the circle of modern industrial civilization." He admitted that this might at first blush seem an unkind purpose toward a tropic land and its people. Where nature is so abundant of her gifts, is it not better that the people be on the land than in factories? The answer is that the insular government under his leadership is putting and keeping as many as possible on the land, and teaching them to make the best use of it; but when as much has been done as can be done in that direction, more—much more—will still be needed.

The first steps toward varied industry, however, are based upon the island's agricultural resources. Porto Rico is prolific of pineapples. Up in the hills there is a wild orange of excellent flavor, and a succulent fruit known as the papaya—but neither of these will stand transportation to distant markets. They can, however, like the pineapple, be canned and chilled. Colonel Roosevelt is vigorously encouraging the establishment of plants for this purpose. The labor party in the insular legislature has given a notable instance of cooperation by approving a measure by which the eight-hour law for women workers can be set aside temporarily whenever the Bureau of Labor finds it necessary to do so at the height of the canning season. The bureau has similar authority as to needleworkers. The needlework referred to is a cottage industry—lace-making and other such work at which the Porto Rican women are very skilled.

Tobacco manufacture is also being fostered. Beyond these industries based on products of the soil, there are many possibilities, which a Bureau of Commerce, instituted at Colonel Roosevelt's suggestion, is studying. Porto Rico has one great advantage as a site for industries—a water haul to all the markets of the world. It has also abundant water-power for hydroelectric development.

No account of present conditions in the island, and Colonel Roosevelt's relation to them, would be complete without brief reference to the University of Porto Rico and certain of its outstanding schools. The three-fold theme of agriculture, health and industry appears again here. The existing small College of Agriculture is to be expanded to a School of Tropical Agriculture in affiliation with Cornell University. A School of Tropical Medicine, under the aegis of Columbia University, already flourishes, and a School of Business Administration, affiliated with Boston University, is also a part of the University of Porto Rico. Here appears an idea of statesmanlike breadth: these schools already attract to themselves students from all parts of Latin America. In the governor's vision, the University of Porto Rico shall be a great Pan-American University, and this, our Latin dependency, shall be the interpreter between North America and Latin America. He urges upon American firms seeking Latin-American trade, the employment of graduates of the University of Porto Rico.

The governor has taken the people of his dominion to his heart. "They are a splendid people, capable of anything—anything—if given a fair chance!" he exclaimed time and again. He admires these people, 90 percent of pure Spanish blood, for their honesty, their industriousness, their courage, their pride, their devotion to the Church. With exquisite tact he has paid their pride the compliment of learning Spanish—the first of our governors to do so. He speaks to them in their own language, and—equally as notable and characteristic—he alone of our governors has visited every one of the seventy-seven municipal districts of Porto Rico, save only two on outlying islands.

I remembered how I had once been the governor's earnest political foe, opposing him vigorously in the press and on the platform; and how he had graciously granted this interview which I had sought in admiration for his present work. I asked him how he liked being governor of Porto Rico. "When the Israelites made bricks without straw," he replied, "they did our daily job. But"—and the infectious smile flashed—"I am having a gorgeous time!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Places and Persons

THE CROSS OF WOOD

By CUTHBERT WRIGHT

IN THE year 1924 a young priest, the Abbé Fernand Maillet was attached as curate to the church of Saint John the Baptist of Belleville, whose Gothic spires set upon a hill dominate the most colorful working suburb of Paris. The sacerdotal calling of the Abbé Maillet seems to have been always accompanied by two ardent avocations. He was first of all a musician, a born trainer of choirs, of the boy voice, and in addition he felt himself irresistibly drawn to that working population among whom he now came to minister—especially to its children.

One of his principal duties on coming to Belleville was to act as chaplain to its parochial school. There he instantly recognized, as any priest with a true love of the liturgy and a real understanding of sacred music would recognize, be it at Belleville or in Brooklyn, that the only practical field of recruitment for a liturgical choir lies in the school normally attached to every parish church. Three months had not passed before Father Maillet had organized what was called the "Little Choir" (*Petite Maitrise*) for the main purpose of fulfilling, perfectly and to the letter, within the limits of a single parish, the neglected Motu Proprio of Pius X.

The people who poohpooh the conception of liturgical art, on the ground that the saving of souls and the social service inherent in the Church leave no time for it, will have noticed for themselves that the Abbé Maillet began his work quite candidly with the ideal of an art. The amazing results and ramifications of that simple gesture I hope to trace in the course of this article. Sufficient to say now that the *Petite Maitrise* was combined with a similar organization already existing at Vaugirard, at the other end of the town, and the combination, while resting its headquarters at Belleville, was christened the "Manécanterie."

The origin of the name is obscure. Manécanterie (from the Latin, *mane cantare*) signifies literally those who chant in the morning. In the middle ages the term designated the school of singing connected with a cathedral. For this reader, at any rate, it is a word charged with overtones. It evokes not only that morning of civilization which we call the middle ages, but also, as does the relief of Donatello, the fresh forenoon of life itself, of the human voice before breaking, the irreclaimable flower of youth, consecrated in a particular manner to Him who is eternally young.

To comprehend the principal values of this work of liturgy and charity, it is necessary to retain two facts in mind. One is the contemporary condition of sacred music in Paris. The other is the character of the particular soil where the Manécanterie has taken root.

We believe on good authority that the modern history of church music in France, at least in the capital, can be divided into two periods, the first anterior to the Law of Separation about 1905, the second afterward. The separation of the Catholic Church from the government of the French Republic left the former exceedingly poor, and necessitated certain retrenchments (not reforms) in the handling of the public offices and ceremonies. Ecclesiastical music seems to have suffered primarily from this readjustment. It requires a fair amount of money to maintain a good choir in the ordinary church, to pay directors and organists of some talent, to pay the choristers, to purchase music, vestments and so on. Yet if we can believe men like Huysmans, writing before 1905, sacred music in the metropolis, has not always been so mediocre. Huysmans was one of the most difficult of men in the matter of religious art, yet he speaks with ardent sympathy of the choir of Saint Sulpice; he calls the Mass as chanted at Saint Severin "exquisite"; the psalmody at Saint Clotilde has remained faithful to the tradition of César Franck, etc.; in short, one has the impression that twenty-five years ago, it was still possible to assist at a choral service in Paris with some degree of edification.

Making one or two reservations, this is no longer the case. And only two years before the separation had reduced choral facilities in Paris, there arrived the encyclical of Pius X which altered and regularized church music in a very particular fashion. In other words, at the same moment when the French Church found herself suddenly impoverished, she faced a situation demanding a special musical and financial effort. Let us admit that she has done her best to obviate the two problems, and let us try not to carp too much at the result. For the result, among other things, is that Paris lacks, almost entirely, sanctuary choirs of any degree of merit.

Another fact we are obliged to mention (since it is in direct relation to our subject) is that extraordinary mixture of pomp and disconcerting indecorum which has so long reigned in Parisian churches. There are certain traditions or bad habits to which the French are attached with a peculiar tenacity. That portentous apparition from a Punch-and-Judy, the *suisse* or beadle, whose smallclothes know not genuflections; the subaltern gentlemen in evening dress with stoles of silver-link who wander in and out of the chancels at all moments; the persons who serve the Mass in jackets and pantaloons; the choirmen in morning coats; the everlasting clink of pew rents and small change, ceasing only at the Elevation to be at once resumed during

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the *Pater Noster*—we question, in all charity, whether such sights and sounds can be experienced in any other Catholic country.

Only a few months after the reorganization of the Manécanterie under the Abbé Maillet, it was evident that a definite musical and liturgical reform had been inaugurated. Something was indeed changed in the diocese of Paris. In this and that church of the capital or its suburbs a white procession of children appeared unexpectedly in the sanctuary clad in albs on which rested the little cross of wood. Others advanced gravely, bearing thurible and taper, preceding the clergy in copes and dalmatics. The church in question might be dim and splendid and 400 years old like Saint Étienne du Mont, or it might be some brick and iron horror erected yesterday. But whether ancient or modern, these children brought to it a reverence, a grace, a religious recollection which was beautiful to watch. And their voices! Under the mediaeval glories of rose windows or the discolored glass of poor chapels, rose the authentic Gregorian *Introit,* chanted in a manner so pure, so religious, so infinitely lovely, that it was enough to touch the heart even of a Paris beadle.

In other words the Manécanterie has for the past six years formed a sort of itinerant choir which is prepared each Sunday or feast day to participate in the ceremonies of any church soliciting its aid. I have seen its repertory, hanging in the music room at Belleville; it is one of astonishing variety and interest from which I retain a few titles: the complete *Kyriale,* that is, the lovely anonymous Masses in pure plain chant to the number of ten or twelve; the Vespers and Compline psalmody in *faux-bourdons* by the masters of the Renaissance; the glorious *Missa Brevis* of Palestrina; the Mass, *O Quam Gloriosum,* of Vittoria; the *Alleluia* of Handel; and innumerable motets by Josquin des Prés, Orlando Lassus, Clemens Non Papa, Mozart and Bach.

Within the first three years of its history it had chanted 500 Offices in Paris, in the French provinces, and abroad at Brussels, Antwerp, Fribourg and Geneva. It was selected by Cardinal Dubois, the late Archbishop of Paris, to accompany him on one of his last pilgrimages to Lourdes. The French Academy has conferred on it one of its annual "Prizes of Virtue," thus recognizing from a non-Christian point of view its highly civilizing and charitable value. And an even prouder moment for *les petits gars de Belleville* (the little kids from Belleville) was when, in November, 1925, Cardinal Ceretti, then apostolic nuncio to France, brought them in their remote Paris slum the special benediction sent them from Rome by Pope Pius XI.

The primary value of this work, however, is not merely aesthetic, but Christian, a Christianity in part attained through the liturgy. I terminate this part of the subject in the modest and moving words of the Father Director:

> The originality of our work lies only in the fact that it considers liturgical art as a very noble means of preparing young hearts for the purest experiences of the Christian ideal. We have simply not wished to neglect these two mediums of action—the service of the altar and the chanting of the Offices—which offer a so powerful aid to religious education, mark so deep an imprint on those who experience them, and constitute the surest method of making these boys love and comprehend their Church, and that not for a few years only, but forever.

These children, whose musical and liturgical training the Manécanterie assures, comes from some of the poorest families in one of the poorest districts of the city. Not everyone appreciates what is meant when one utters the word "Belleville" in contemporary Paris. Actually it is an overpopulated hill crowning a segment of the northern circumference of the vast town. In other times, it possessed a faded Louis Philippard charm, and it was down its flanks that the *Courtille,* the fantastic procession of Mardi Gras revelers, descended each year through the bluish dawn to take their coffee in the fresh air on the grand boulevards. At present it is given over to a dense population of workers who toil all day, with impossible hours, at a derisive pay, in the factories, the department stores, the transports, the shambles. The hill is scored and crevassed with ragged streets, blackened alleys, bursting tenements. The very hardest sort of poverty reigns there supreme, but a poverty miraculously shot through with self-respect, and which rays out from every side a truculent good temper, a divine courage, a moving fraternity, a singular idealism.

As Robert Garric writes in his study of the quarter, "This people is essentially Christian." What does it matter that it debaptize with its own vocabulary some of the principles ordained by Christ, that it gives the name of "solidarity" to that which was once called *caritas*? The point is that this people well knows the secret of love, and where there is love, where there is charity, to quote the motto of the Manécanterie, there is God. "Where they have remained faithful to the Church," continues M. Garric, "they practise their religion with far more mystic intensity, more simple affection than do the sophisticated." It is not surprising that in this soil, soaked in sweat, redolent of unselfish revolutions, the Communist illusion has risen like a midnight growth to dispute the radiant régime of Christ the King. A large proportion of the Belleville working class have lent their own ardent generosity to an alien ideal, and in giving it their hearts, they have almost communicated their own humanity to this inhuman thing. The Abbé Maillet told me that several of his little singers were recruited from Communist families, and showed me with a smile a recent photograph of a former youth leader in the *Jeunesses Communistes;* the boy in question was clad in the habit of a Benedictine novice.

Our thoughts turned naturally toward "those places, those streets" when in the church of Saint Étienne du

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mont we heard the Manécanterie sing to a poignant *faux-bourdon* the noble psalm assigned to the Vespers of the Blessed Virgin:

> Unless the Lord build the house; they labor in vain who build it.
>
> Unless the Lord keep the city; he watcheth in vain that keepeth it. In vain do ye rise before the light; ye who eat the bread of sorrow.
>
> When he hath given sleep to his beloved; children are an heritage from the Lord.
>
> Like the arrows in the hand of the Mighty One; so are the children of those who have been cast out.

"The children of those who have been cast out." It was of themselves that they sang, these pale youngsters in their white albs, each marked with the wooden stigma of the sufferings of Christ. Literally they chanted their own background of gray deprivation, their inheritance, sometimes tinctured with alcoholism and malady, always heavy with the weariness of generations who have known no joy; but they celebrated also another world, a better country, a place of light and solace and peace. What obliged them to come to this rich church save the love of God, the devotion to their Mané, and the pure satisfaction of doing one of the most beautiful things in the world beautifully?

Perhaps it is necessary to comprehend the poverty of Paris and the spirit of Paris youth when it is poor, and to be poor oneself, in order to appreciate how inexplicably moving was the moment I am trying to describe. "You do not know these boys," said the Abbé Maillet to me, some weeks later. "Under that proletarian pose of hardness, the fear of seeming too good, they conceal miracles of delicacy, of kindness, a richness of character to which I simply cannot do justice." He mentioned Robert Legrand, a vivacious boy, only fourteen but already bent on becoming a priest, who in November, 1927, was killed in falling from a roof, and buried in his white habit, the wooden cross clasped in his little scarred hands. The whole Manécanterie mourned him passionately; they encircled the spot where he fell with the chrysanthemums which bloom in autumn and the lilies of the valley . . . of death; within the circle they planted wheat destined to be made into wafers, received in Holy Communion by his comrades in memory of the dead boy.

It was not for nothing, we may believe, that this organization was designated by the Academy as "a work of civilizing charity." Many who may read these lines, and who measure all things by their supposed social utility, may perhaps imagine that the Manécanterie is a mere affair of pretty little choir boys executing on special occasions ecclesiastical music at least four centuries old. "What is the use of that?" they may perchance demand. We reply that its use is to take some sixty or so gamins out of a joyless existence, and to teach them to chant the authentic praises of God without any recompense save that which goes toward their maintenance in common. Its use is to make them sing like angels and serve the altar like kings. Is that nothing to you who are continually talking about the liturgical reform, and who have so seldom, if ever, seen it in practice?

And now for the others. The "use" of the Manécanterie is to combine these children, and many others who lack or who have lost their singing voice, into two troops of Boy Scouts (Paris XX and XXI) who beat the clean countryside on holidays, far from the impested air of the capital, and spend one month of the year in the mountains or by the sea. Its use is to maintain a studio where wood-carving and the designing of vestments are taught. Its use is to maintain a school where those who show signs of a vocation are permitted to continue their elementary studies up to the moment of entering the "little seminary." Its use is to develop the qualities of courage, comradeship, manliness and good-will in those who, often possessing the germs of these virtues already, are struggling against on environment which tends always to drag them down. Its use is to save certain of these little ones from the ignoble distractions of the Paris street, from alcoholism and prostitution, from crime. Its use, finally, is to illuminate this dim corner of a single Paris slum with a little joy, a touch of happiness, a promise of that kingdom of God whose advent we implore, all too lightly, every time we utter the dominical prayer. And all this with so meager, so painfully acquired, an equipment!

We have seen a notice in *Les Chroniques,* the fascinating little magazine published by the community, in which the Abbé Maillet actually had to plead for such things as a ciborium, a harmonium for his choir practice, a few more chairs, a few books. . . . As for the improvised chapel, it is exquisite like everything connected with the Mané, but so incredibly small that it cannot even receive the parents of the choristers who might care to hear their children sing, and often at Mass many of the boys are forced to kneel on the stairs outside, out of sight of the altar. Think of the immeasurable good, for the quarter, for the public, in a chapel of adequate proportions, where the glories of those young voices could be heard by everyone!

In Time of Autumn Rains

Give over this long sorrow, heart, give over;
There has been enough of blood and sweat and pain.—
Now when the streaming rains have come to cover
All that was summer fruit and summer stain,
Give them this thing to cover with the rest,
To still and drown and bury out of sight;
Give over, heart, this weeping in the breast,
Unto the weeping rains, out in the night.

Give over, now . . . you will be stilled and lonely,
And in another year of nights and days,
The long, dull rains of autumn will be only
The long, dull rains of autumn with their ways
Of waking the dim ghosts of things that weep,
And you will listen, lightly, and fall asleep.

DAVID MORTON.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DENATURING THE MIDDLE AGES

By HARVEY WICKHAM

AN ARTIST is sometimes entitled to indulge in exaggeration. It is his metier. In no other way can he isolate his theme and give it that fictitious importance which attracts attention and exalts the mind.

I say fictitious importance because, were all things to be considered strictly according to their relative importance, no human idea would be entitled to so much as a word. So the artist, whether in words or lines or color, stresses this at the expense of that, and prints as it were in italics with occasional heavy underscoring. As he is bound to reduce the scale, he can do no other. And so, if he is very wise, or inspired with genius, and lays his high lights in just the right place, he may paint or write better than he dreams, pointing the way to that which is beyond him, where the human perspective is lost in the divine.

But if he fails to see the point, even of his surfaces; if he lays the high lights wrong and where they are not enlightening; then the noblest subject in the world becomes trivial, false and muddy in his hands.

What I am thinking of in particular is the modern treatment of the middle ages—for this theme is being used more and more frequently by secular writers, and not always without sympathy. Its gorgeous colors are irresistible. How could such a theme be neglected? And yet, aside from writers whose aims are frankly pious, how seldom does this sympathy for the mere pageantry amount to an understanding of the play! It was, of course, a mystery play. For the middle ages were the ages of faith, when a consciousness of the reality and nearness of the spiritual world fairly drenched the minds not only of the faithful but of all men, even the most vile—which doubtless sounds like saying with great pomp and ceremony that the sun rises in the east, or that two twos are four. Everybody knows that the middle ages were the ages of faith.

Does everybody? If my own reading is any criterion, not only faith but the fact of its ancient prevalence remains a secret still hidden from the world at large. I do indeed occasionally find a writer who says that the middle ages were superstitious, but invariably he proves to have so little sympathy with what he is trying to write about that he misses even the color, and his words have no meaning. Let us see how it fares with those whose eyes are at least not color-blind.

Sacheverell Sitwell has written a book very much to the point in question—"The Gothick North," a trilogy dealing with mediaeval life, art and thought.

Nothing could be more admirable than the industry and flair with which he has gathered together this curious sheaf of out-of-the-ordinary information. Nothing could be more eloquently bizarre than the descriptions of rare and priceless tapestries which serve here and there as woof to the slender warp-like threads of his narrative. But note this passage—from the first chapter of one about to interpret the age of faith:

> This book is to be a study, if not a defense, of the fair-haired races. . . . Besides this, it is to be a study of the arts produced by the mediaeval Church when it worked in Gothick, and not Italian, modes. It must be, in part, then, about monks and monasteries, about the triumphs and defeats of celibacy. All my life I have wondered at that strange and neutral existence still led in our midst.

This word "neutral" strikes the first discord. Toward what in the world were or are monks "neutral"? And if he really means "neuter," as one feels certain he does, the blunder is just that much worse. But he should at least be given credit for his "wonder." He is no ordinary ignoramus, nor panderer, nor anticleric. So let him go on:

> It is monk more than priest [the two seem to have become suddenly incompatible] that I am studying; the celibate shut close within walls is my subject, though I may go outside this into the streets and lodgings where priests dwell. [Wonders increase. All monks get shut behind walls and are never to be seen in the streets—and this from the pen of one who lives in Europe!] Yet I have been interested in churches, and not in prayers. For those long hours were a penance, and so far as I am concerned I have no beliefs, and they [the monks] were wasting their time. Their millions upon millions of mumbled breaths I have left uncounted; I have little interest in ritual, and only care for superstition when it is answered dramatically, or has coarse and brutal eccentricity.

No, Sacheverell Sitwell is not pornographic, and lusts not for the flesh in letters, but only for the outré. He is posing here as a devil of a fellow, but would shrink from the really brutal just as he would shrink from poverty or work. He is interested in churches, not in slaughter-houses—though in this particular volume the interest ends by limiting itself to the cathedral of Chartres and some rare fragments of architecture in Spain. But how could he have hoped to describe the thought of the middle ages without having at least a little interest in prayers? His eye catches those uncounted "mumbled breaths" as they rise in white vapor upon the cool Northern air. He does not miss the picture. But to have "no beliefs" is not only a curious state for a human being to be in, it is a coarse and brutal eccentricity for one looking for the more dramatic answers to those old "superstitions." Even the most superficial lover of churches should have guessed that the essential drama of these answers was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neither coarse, brutal, eccentric, nor even visible to the bodily sight. After all, it is not what Sitwell thinks the monks were doing with their time, but what the monks thought and what they really were doing with it, which calls for answer.

The fact is, our Sacheverell is neither a lover of churches nor of much of anything else. He has, he tells us, found art to be the only tolerable thing in life. This is not to love even art, however capital its A. For what is art if it reveals nothing except the way in which something, itself, to wit, is done? So isolated, it refuses to answer the question why it was done, or why anything should be done, or why it is worth doing. The means of expression were never meant to bear the heavy burden of being also the thing expressed, or to struggle with the interpretation of a life in which there is nothing to be interpreted.

So this "Gothick North," robbed of its end and aim, is merely North, and refuses to be Gothick. It is pervaded by a singular lack of joy, by a spirit of aimless and weary existence, which is about as mediaeval as a mule is prolific. The reader is depressed. In spite of his promise, the author avoids even a glimpse of the monks save in a single chapter—when he finds them not in cloisters but in goose-towns, which is well and good. But we don't get near even to the geese. And as for the gorgeous knights and their ladies, they are evidently bored. Like Sacheverell, they seem to have no beliefs. The first part of the trilogy is entitled "The Visit of the Gypsies." But the actual visit comes a few pages before the end, and not until then is there a stir of real breathing and pulsing life. The gypsies, you understand, are minstrels, typifying the arrival of music to this, our songless mediaeval world.

Yes, he would have it that there was no music till knighthood began to deflower in scattered petals, making way for the Renaissance and the Jews. He admits a thin ballad or two, and such chanting as might express the superstitions of time-wasting monks without hope of brutally dramatic answers. But his lack of interest in ritual seems to have extended to plain song. I only hope he does not prefer Rossini to Palestrina. But it is easy to see now what he is driving at. He wishes to sing the praises of paganism. He notes with accurate eye the strange absence of nudity throughout the middle ages, but misses the reason why. He sees no passion there, either of the flesh or of the spirit. He is what Wyndham Lewis would call "a musical philosopher," music being understood not as melody but as rhythm. He would sing the praises of motion in some antique kind of jazz. But his talents are for the static. So I venture to predict that not even modern paganism will ever dance to his tune, while the very idea of his misdated minuet ever having won a smile from Aphrodite wins a smile indeed, but from Comus rather than from Love.

And yet, he can make his puppets, which he takes from old looms and from missals and miniatures of an authenticity so much higher than his own, wiggle about with gestures which are at least lifelike. He is really amazingly clever, a fine poetaster in his cunningly contrived prose:

> . . . The door led through the orchard below my window. The bells working through this mist and under the loaded fruit boughs seemed to lose their hammering insistence, the brief and catastrophic lilt of their leaden burden, and they flowed evenly into the most lovely of melodies that poured themselves unceasingly into fresh shapes, and then moved with those very limbs of poetry they had evolved into more firm and brighter changes. A rhapsody, or heroic mood, with its drums beating to a fierier measure than any heart or breath could bear, would turn in the very throat of its own pace into a languorous and hardly flowing pastoral, and then quicken from those sighing sheaves to a held and insistent monotone, some thicket of sly whispers, or a fountain's voice hushing the words behind its shade. That shade of sound and not of sight, for the thin crystal of its jet made no scream. . . . Its gay and dangerous glitter showed a young lady at the fountain brim with her ankles and pale feet in the water.

And thus we pass, almost without knowing it, from a modern hillside in Surrey, "along the ridge of those white cliffs that the Canterbury pilgrims rode," into a bit of ancient tapestry. There is certainly a musical play upon words, quite harmlessly artificial. But they are with all their glitter as cold and colder than the tapestried fountain. Neither faith nor passion pauses to express itself thus.

The third part of the trilogy, is the best. As the author passes from "The Visit of the Gypsies" to "These Sad Ruins" and then to "The Fair-Haired Victory," the characteristic defects of his writing diminish and the excellences increase. He still attempts to make the middle ages live again without permitting himself to see that the faith which kept them alive was a real faith, something actually accepted and believed in; but with every page it evidently becomes more and more difficult for his eyes to remain closed.

Now it would be perfectly legitimate, I think, for an author who did not believe in Catholicism to write a book giving his impression of the architectural and historical remains of the pre-Reformation period in Europe. Certainly it has often been done, and the result has always a sort of interest—like a deaf man's description of a symphony concert. But when an author fails to realize that a faith which he rejects may nevertheless be a faith, that the cold discomfort which he feels about it is not that which is felt by the faithful, he becomes slightly offensive in a positive way—as when a deaf man stoutly declares that nobody likes music.

And that was Sitwell in "The Visit of the Gypsies." But in "The Fair-Haired Victory" he is almost victorious, almost gets rid of the body of his earlier death—almost, though not quite. He still compels himself to pity the monks and nuns as he moves en-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

raptured among the architectural glories of their ancient homes; he must still say a good word for irreligion now and then, even though religion glows upon him from some illuminated missal whose loveliness all but moves him to tears. It is almost as if there was somewhere in his mind a devil's altar, before which he thinks he ought at least to genuflect every time he passes.

And how widespread this attitude is! Sacheverell Sitwell is by no means the only modern author whose knees behave as if they owed a certain politeness to hell. Heterodoxy has become obligatory in their set. Not to growl out an oath or a blasphemy once in a while is to be guilty of an intolerable breach of good form. Sitwell, however, is beginning to curse exceeding small, and his curses turn to commiserations—sometimes even to self-commiserations, I think. He tries to dislike monks, yet is moved to write about them. He tries to dislike the Church, and to warm his heart in mere churches built of stone. But what he really dislikes is a picture of the Church, drawn by Reformation artists, which was one of the decorations of his early surroundings. And these stone churches of the "Gothick North"—some of them as far north as Spain and Portugal—give that picture the lie.

As he wanders from pile to pile, he suggests a dreamer desperately striving not to awaken out of a nightmare. So he clutches at trifles, and notes with considerable satisfaction that "the effect of seeing so many tonsures together is . . . rather repugnant." He complains of an outbreak of ringworm in an orphanage, but he is compelled to add: "Yet for many hundreds of years there was little hope for mankind outside such walls as these." Think of it! Hope gets into a monastery. It never could have happened during the visit of the gypsies. His monks now attain to "normality" though through "other directions" than those taken by the laity. He even suggests that this monkish "normality would naturally exceed the average as much as their privations put them below it." Nevertheless he remains "appalled and stifled" when he thinks "of their hours of prayer."

For he tells us that the monk's cell, "the inmost room with the garden below," is "the focus of his whole life," for there is where he paints. There is an altar in the church, but apparently none in the monk's heart—save that which is a table holding his manuscripts or his plans for new buildings. Under such circumstances as these, those hours of prayer must have been a horror indeed.

It is only when he wanders into pagan temples that Sitwell is free from his malaise, that pitiable and perfectly genuine horror which his education has imposed between himself and that which he loves in spite of himself. He does not, like most modernists, indulge in fits of pretended worship before these Indian, and Persian and Javanese shrines as a back-handed way of flinging mud at the cross. He becomes at once sane and sympathetic. He can see both the strength and the weakness of pagan struggles after loveliness. So his phrases grow worthy of a Pierre Loti, without Loti's mockishness.

"Tabriz, which is to us a name fringed with daggers, was in Bihzad's day a city of poets and scholars." And of all the miniature painters, whose works came to be collected by the Mogul emperors, Bihzad was the greatest. He worked on paper "manufactured by devious processes. Its surface was incessantly polished for weeks together with an egg-shaped crystal." And the result would sometimes eventually sell for the equivalent of half a million dollars.

But I do not see what the Gothick North has to do with all this, nor can I even guess what he means by the fair-haired victory. The only victory he mentions is that of the hair, which—as he points out—has always been a favorite with painters: hair the color of corn, or gold, or of red, dying embers. But as most of the painters were Italians, Spaniards, or Portuguese, this looks like a Southern fondness for color rather than a Nordic triumph. Possibly color is all that Sitwell is seeking in what he persists in calling his "thesis."

Some of his word-painting is truly lovely—as when, outside of the Cistercian chapter-house at Poblet, "sometimes a wind rose up; and it rubbed as though it were a dog against door and window." Why must he add that the inside "to the novices . . . must have been their prison, with no hope of release! Long draughts, or sloped ladders of the light, come in at the windows, and often a bird or a bat, whose stupidity in not escaping when all the airs were open to it, was a sarcasm sent to torture them." That friendly old dog, the wind, knew better. It was trying to get in, like the birds, the bats, and the sloped ladders of light. Sitwell speaks elsewhere of "a little sound of sudden darkness." He achieves it here, I am afraid.

Yet, as to starlight, he knows all "the little secrecies of its action upon leaf and branch." He even sees, as by this same starlight, that "the appointed measures of that noise and silence" marked by bell-ringing convent clocks "built an authentic truth behind the artifice by which it was accomplished." Yet, as he thinks "we only look upon the outside walls and can never gain entrance," and that "the ghost at a window is all the reward of vigilance," he finds that this past "is almost unendurable," and demands, almost with a shudder, "What has been the use of it all?" He does not ask this foolish question of the typhoon:

> The proud Indies bow down and are bound with waters. The rain is as thick as jungle. Its knots and cables trail down from the trees and are impenetrable. To walk through them is to be hit by a chain of hammers, and to be thrown clear of them soaked and beaten by their force.
>
> The doors of the temples are guarded by rods of rain, which the sudden winds blow forth in a gust as though the roofs were splitting them out. The inky sky lies

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Honorable John McNab, one of San Francisco's favorite orators, detailed something of the history of the institution that now becomes the city's university. It began its academic career in a very modest little frame house in the disturbed San Francisco of 1855, when the gold rush was still bringing all sorts of people, not a few of them eminently undesirable as citizens, to the El Dorado of the West. One of the early Jesuits wrote in a letter: "Whether the city should be called a madhouse or Babylon, I am at a loss to determine. . . . The reign of crime . . . triumphs on soil not yet brought under the sway of human laws." Certainly these people needed the training of mind and heart and will which the Jesuits hoped and planned to bring them.

Their labors at the beginning met with little encouragement. The number of pupils the first year was just one. The patriarch of the new school, Father Foley, was not discouraged by this, but saw to it that the single student received instruction in accord with the *ratio studiorum* of the order at any other Jesuit school. Just as long ago in education circles in the East, it was said that "Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other end made a university," so it was with the Jesuits in San Francisco. And little as either master or pupil may have dreamed at the time of any such consummation, that very modest beginning proved to be the foundation of a work that in the course of two generations was destined to play a great rôle in the annals of San Francisco. And today immense possibilities lie ahead of it.

Archbishop Hanna of San Francisco expressed his profound gratitude for all that the Jesuits had accomplished, and asked for a moment of silent commemoration of the faithful teachers whose life work has meant so much for Church and State in California. And the past, he said, was as nothing compared to what the future promises to bring for the new University of San Francisco. The archbishop's enthusiastic encouragement meant much for the civic success of the diamond jubilee, for he is beloved of San Franciscans of all beliefs and even no belief.

The high point of the celebration was Cardinal Hayes's sermon at the jubilee Mass. He took for his text the well-known description of Saint Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians, of his labors and perils by land and sea, at the hands of friends and false brethren, in hunger and thirst and cold; and applied the passage to the work of the Jesuits in California and throughout the West. The cardinal emphasized particularly Jesuit interest in science, for the coördination of science and faith will provide a balance between the material, the intellectual and the spiritual. The question whether man is to be the master or the victim of his own mechanical creations, has been rendered poignantly insistent by the great war and its scientific destructiveness.

Very opportunely, in the midst of the jubilee celebration, there came a decision from the Supreme Court of the United States permitting the sale to the university authorities of the cemetery that adjoins the college campus. Long-drawn-out litigation had held up the acquisition by the university of this additional property which will more than double the size of its campus. This will permit the extension of the buildings of the new University of San Francisco, so that the plans already formulated for a greater institution may be carried out. Nothing now hinders the creation within the limits of the city of San Francisco, of a university named after it that will be thoroughly representative of its earliest traditions—a foster-mother of the culture and aesthetics for which the city of the Golden Gate has been noted in the midst of the many vicissitudes of its history.

COMMUNICATIONS

THE LAST OF THE GAELS

Dublin, Ireland.

TO the Editor: The communication in your issue of October 1 from An Piobaire savors strongly of the untruthful propaganda against the Irish Free State, circulated so sedulously through the medium of certain obscure and totally irresponsible political sheets in the United States. Had the effusion in question appeared in an organ of less prestige and influence I should deem it unworthy of notice but, realizing the high place which THE COMMONWEAL occupies in the respect and esteem of educated Catholic opinion upon both sides of the Atlantic, I am tempted to challenge the statements broadcast by your anonymous correspondent concerning conditions in, what I must presume to be, his native land.

The Irish Free State is a sovereign independent state in every essential sense of the term. No power, influence or authority whatsoever exists either within or outside the Free State to overrule, hamper or impede the free exercise by the duly elected Parliament of the state of the full internal and external sovereignty resident therein. It is expressly laid down in the national constitution that all authority—legislative, executive and judicial—is derived solely and exclusively from the people of Ireland. True, the Irish Free State is a member of the free association of independent states which is known as the British Commonwealth of Nations. Citizens of the United States of America, with the great and growing nation of Canada before their eyes, must realize that just as her membership in the British Commonwealth imposes no limitation or restriction on Canada's sovereignty, neither does it do so in the case of her sister state on this side of the Atlantic. As a matter of fact—whatever be the obsolete legal formulae—the juridical evolution of the dominions has now reached that stage when actual secession from the commonwealth has ceased to be an implicit and has become an explicit attribute of the constitutional status enjoyed by members of this free association.

Perhaps no better words could be found to sum up the change which has come about within the British Commonwealth during and since the World War than those uttered by that great Irish statesman, the late Kevin O'Higgins, on the eve of the Imperial Conference of 1926: "The British Empire of Queen Victoria and John Mitchel is as dead as that great queen and that great statesman."

Apart from all this it should be remembered that the Free State came into existence, not as in the case of the dominions by virtue of an act of the British Parliament, but as the result of an international instrument negotiated between Ireland and Great Britain and subsequently ratified by the parliaments of both countries. I refer to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

Those of your readers who have followed me this far will agree, I think, that it must be either ignorance or perversity which prompts your correspondent to pipe the old tune about "British authority" in the Irish Free State, for manifestly no such authority exists. Neither is "a junta" in control here. The government is in the hands of the majority party freely elected by the people of this state on the basis of adult suffrage.

I shall, with your kind permission, conclude by setting down a few facts concerning the policy of the Irish government in regard to the national language and the Gaeltacht. Your readers may find in them, inter alia, an answer to the query of An Piobaire as to "how it is [the Government of the Irish Free State] favorable to the development of Gaelic."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The armed attempt of a minority to overthrow the Irish Free State during the first year or so of its existence is now a matter of history. There is no occasion at this stage to recall in detail the horrors and destruction wrought in Ireland during the year 1922-1923. Not the least disastrous effect was in the moral order. The Irish people were robbed by Mr. De Valera's dupes of all the glory attending the victory of 1921, and the enthusiasm which the advent of political liberty to other countries released there for national cultural movements, was diverted, in this country, by the political kindred of An Piobaire, into the barren activity of a civil war.

In spite, however, of this great handicap, one of the first problems to which the Irish government turned its attention was that of reviving the national tongue. The Irish language was made a compulsory subject of primary, secondary and higher education. Entrance to every branch of the state service was barred to those ignorant of Irish. Several special colleges have been established in the Gaeltacht, or Irish-speaking districts, to educate children (who contemplate entering the teaching profession) solely through the medium of Irish. Gradually the whole teaching body of the Irish Free State is being replaced by one, every member of which must be competent to teach the whole school program in Irish. Entrance to the legal profession is now closed to those ignorant of the national language. The near future will see a similar barrier erected by the state on every avenue to power, honor or emolument here. The writing and publication of Irish is encouraged by state subsidies. Gaelic dramatic societies are financed by the state in Dublin and Galway. Plans are almost mature for the establishment of a Gaelic University in Galway on the fringe of the Connacht Gaeltacht. In short, no effort nor expense has been spared by the government since the establishment of the state to stimulate and encourage in every reasonable way the revival of the ancient language of the race. The work is necessarily slow but it is going steadily ahead.

With regard to the economic development of the Irish-speaking districts, more has been done to this end since the establishment of the Irish Free State than had been done in a generation before. The fishing industry is being overhauled and reorganized on modern coöperative lines. The kelp industry reestablished under the Department of Fisheries brought over £14,000 (about $70,000) to the Gaeltacht this season. Thousands of holdings of land have been enlarged and consolidated and many thousands of acres of untenanted land divided into comfortable holdings. The government has just provided a sum of £60,000 to be spent solely in Gaeltacht districts on the provision and reconstruction of houses. Cottage and local industries and crafts such as lace-making, weaving and knitting, have been developed and encouraged throughout the Irish-speaking districts, expert direction provided and a central marketing organization set up, by the state in Dublin, to secure that an adequate return on their labor is received by the Gaelic-speaking craftsmen.

These are but some of the steps which have been taken by the government to foster a spirit of self-help among the people and to bring about better economic conditions generally throughout the Gaeltacht. As in the case of the language, the economic development of the Gaeltacht must take time. Prosperity is a delicate and slow-growing plant calling for patient and well-thought-out methods of cultivation. The present condition of world-wide depression and unemployment has its reactions here, and tends to render still more difficult the task which the Irish government has in hand.

MICHEAL MACSUIBHNE.

THE "NEO-CATHOLIC" PARTY

Arlington, Mass.

TO the Editor: I don't know just what a "Neo-Catholic" is, but, as THE COMMONWEAL allowed one of its correspondents recently almost a page in which to describe me as such, I take it that it must be something especially terrible.

Lest people who do not know me face to face should get the impression that the portrait of me which your correspondent has painted is true to life, may I ask a few inches of your space, not to call that gentleman names, or to imply that he is incapable of telling the truth, but merely to put in a few strokes that may (to my mind, at least) make the portrait seem more like the original?

I was born in Ireland, the son of a family Catholic and Roman Catholic since the days of Saint Patrick; I was baptized in infancy as is usual with Roman Catholics (I don't know what "Neo-Catholics" do about this) and was educated in the schools of the Irish Christian Brothers, an order quite well known in Ireland for its orthodoxy. I was brought into contact early with the Franciscians, and served Mass for years at the Franciscan friary. Coming to America at fifteen I continued to practise my faith here openly. I have never denied that faith and never belonged to any group which minimized that faith, although never being as good an example of Catholicism as I should have been. Always interested in Catholic literature, at the age of twenty-five I secured a place with the *Sacred Heart Review* of Boston, which was edited by the late Monsignor John O'Brien, in whose company "Neo-Catholics" (whatever they are) would not last very long. I was associate editor with him of the *Review* until 1917.

In 1901, I should say, I was married in the Catholic Church to a Catholic wife, and I have brought up my only child, a daughter, in the Catholic faith. In 1917 I resigned from the *Review* for free-lance writing and lecturing. My work as a writer has been Catholic enough for the pages of the *Catholic World, Ave Maria, America, Boston Pilot* and many other Catholic (not "Neo-Catholic") publications. In 1918 I was with the Knights of Columbus Committee on War Activities in Washington—and the K. of C. is not, I believe, a "Neo-Catholic" organization. In 1922 I made the commencement address at, and was given the degree of LL.D from, Boston College, a Jesuit institution not much given to handing out honorary degrees to "Neo-Catholics."

All my life I have been identified with Catholic organizations and movements. At various times I have worked as a member of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic Total Abstinence Movement, the Catholic Order of Foresters, Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Rural Life Conference, the Catholic Press Association (being one of the first members of that organization), the Holy Name Society and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. I am the president of the Holy Name Society in my own parish and a member of the board of directors of the Catholic Alumni Sodality of Boston College.

Those who wish to know more about my Catholicity might write to my present pastor, the Reverend Maurice O'Connor, Saint James Church, Arlington, Massachusetts, the Reverend James E. Mellyn, S.J., spiritual director of the Catholic Alumni Sodality, or to numerous friends of mine in the priesthood, such as the Very Reverend James Anthony Walsh of Maryknoll, New York, the Very Reverend John F. Fenlon, S.S., of Saint Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, or the Reverend W. Howard Bishop of Clarksville, Maryland, president of the Catholic Rural Life Conference.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

May I add that I have written six books of verse, not a line of which has been questioned for its orthodoxy, although as poetry THE COMMONWEAL might think it quite atrocious.

It is with no great pleasure that I rehearse these facts. They are insignificant enough in themselves. But I think you will agree that in view of the unfavorable picture of me presented by your correspondent it is only fair that I should be given a chance to put in some lines and colors which that gentleman forgot to incorporate in the portrait.

DENIS A. MCCARTHY.

A MAP FOR MILITARISTS

Dorchester, Mass.

TO the Editor: Perhaps nowhere else may one find merchandise combining beauty and utility in so high a degree as in a china shop, apt symbol of our civilization. And when we seek to express our idea of senseless rage, no better figure presents itself than that of a mad bull, a symbol of savagery.

One might expect, therefore, to find all china shops adequately guarded against mad bulls, but no—let public opinion go primitive and the owners of our very fragile civilization themselves hasten to turn loose maddened animals to riot over each other's richest shops.

Wherefore, in the interest of that same economy which was the aim and the chief result of the recent naval treaty, a suggestion is offered, in a semi-ironic mood, that all future wars be fought where there are neither china shops nor crockery-laden ships, viz., in no man's land and upon no man's sea, the armies to meet in the Sahara Desert, about five degrees west by twenty-five degrees north, and the navies in mid-south Atlantic, about ten degrees west by thirty degrees south. In the localities here chosen the belligerents are not likely to be distracted from their main business of killing each other.

Consider the great gain resulting to the world's wealth from this conservation of its material substance. Whether loss of human life might be greater or less than heretofore is problematical, but any economist will tell you that there is nothing cheaper than human life.

After all, does it seem less rational to limit the use of ships and guns than to limit their number and power? And should it be objected that the nations would never tolerate such drastic limitations, the answer might well be couched in the words used by M. Clemenceau, in another connection, "Then, gentlemen, you do not want peace."

CHRISTOPHER I. FITZGERALD.

DISTRACTIONS OF A CHURCHGOER

Pittsfield, Mass.

TO the Editor: For several days I have been trying to find something finer in a sprightly literary sense than "Distractions of a Churchgoer" (Mary Elizabeth Magennis in THE COMMONWEAL, October 22), but my search was unrewarded. Having read it through carefully three times for the good of my own soul, I am passing it along to a friend from whom I have exacted a promise to keep the review in circulation until it is worn out!

Never in America has this particular ecclesiastical viewpoint been presented so sanely, so intelligently, with such rare good humor as in the columns of your excellent journal. But I do wish you would go a little easy on my friend Mencken. Even if he does drive us to spiritual madness sometimes, he is a light in the world.

JOSEPH HOLLISTER.

THE PLAY AND SCREEN

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

Solid South

SO MUCH genial warmth and friendly satire pervades this story of a poverty-stricken family mansion of the deep South, that one reports reluctantly a rather painful evaporation of interest in the last act. Up to that time, "Solid South" is the kind of play that warms the cockles of your heart. It is penetrating in its character study, deliciously relaxing in its quality of warm moonlight, and deftly humorous in its treatment of a generation that still lives in past glories, embattled by unconquered pride.

The play was written by Lawton Campbell and is directed by Reuben Mamoulian, with an inimitable setting by Jo Mielziner. Richard Bennett, Jessie Royce Landis, Elizabeth Patterson and Bette Davis give it the touch of completion by expert acting.

The story of the play is of the kind that encourages your belief in simplicity—especially when applied to expert and faintly exaggerated characterization. The play simply outlines the violent reactions of Major Bruce Follonsby (Richard Bennett) to the visit of a wealthy Northerner and his son, and their respective attentions to the major's daughter-in-law and granddaughter. The major lives proudly in his past, in a mansion stripped of most of its furniture and portraits. The Yankee is still anathema and the state of Virginia is without the pale after "going Republican" in the last elections. The major's sister, Geneva (played as only Elizabeth Patterson can play a warm-hearted old maid), keeps the house running. The widow of the major's son (Jessie Royce Landis) pursues her pretty and languid ways, warring with the hot sun against freckles, and resting in bed every few hours to preserve her beauty and complexion. Her daughter, Bam (Bette Davis), is ambitious to work—to the horror of both the major and her mother. Everthing is in this quiet and genteel decay until the brief visit of Edward Garrison and his considerably spoiled son, Rex.

This visit brings an upheaval in all the established values. Mr. Garrison is a widower and promptly falls for the blandishments of the widowed Leila Mae. Rex finds romance in the Southern moon and little Bam. The major fumes and threatens and orates and forbids, and finally orders the Yankees from his house at the point of a gun—but, as you have guessed, to no avail. The only essential weakness of the play lies just in this fact—that you can so readily guess each move in advance, and that so little of novelty or interest is left for the last act.

But this weakness is heavily overbalanced by the happy combination of excellent staging and setting with almost perfect acting. Reuben Mamoulian is better known as a director of plays with colorful and almost operatic atmosphere. But, as in "Wings over Europe," he amply demonstrates in the present instance his qualities in the quieter key. His sense of rhythm is unfailing. He brings a full and rounded quality to the play which keeps it, at many crucial moments, from coming too near to the edge of farce.

Richard Bennett is, of course, at his blustering and cantankerous best as the fiery and childish old major. He makes the characterization complete to the most minute details. Miss Landis seems born to the languishing part of Leila Mae, and the charming little Bette Davis, who recently contributed so much to "Broken Dishes," provides an interesting contrast in the ambitious but dutiful Bam. Moffat Johnston is excellent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as the wooing and abrupt Garrison, and Owen Davis, jr., takes Rex quite seriously enough to make one feel the potent atmosphere of magnolias on a Southern night. The completing touch is supplied by three colored actors as servants—Georgette Harvey, Richard Huey and Lew Payton. Their comedy is authentic and never overdone. (At the Lyceum Theatre.)

This One Man

SIDNEY BUCHMAN has written one of the few seriously interesting plays of the current season. With Leo Bulgakov's direction, excellently atmospheric settings by Woodman Thompson, and Paul Muni (formerly Muni Weisenfreud) as the principal actor, "This One Man" becomes a highly distinguished and, at times, exceedingly dramatic two hours in the theatre. It suffers seriously in spots with the usual overdose of blasphemous language and suffers even more seriously from a structural defect which I shall speak about later. But there is swift impulse and deep underlying sincerity throughout and, wherever the idea itself is too frail to support the drama, the details of plot and staging come to the rescue.

Briefly, the play relates the story of two brothers who are really in their opposite natures complete complements to each other. Saul Holland (Paul Muni) is hard, brutal and physically strong. Marvin Holland (Paul Guilfoyle) is a weakling physically, but endowed with all the sensitive feelings and qualities of soul which his brother lacks. Marvin has a curious, almost mystical, feeling that he is necessary to his brother and must dedicate his life to implanting in Saul the qualities which he lacks.

The play opens in the Holland home while the boys' mother is dying upstairs. Saul has been in prison but comes back for one hour, under guard, to be at his mother's deathbed. He takes her death without a sign of feeling or emotion. Even his feelings toward his young wife, Mollie, are characterized by this same lack of anything except a sense of brute mastery. The development of the story involves Saul's escape from prison to do a safe-cracking "job" and the way in which Marvin is able to take upon his own shoulders the responsibility for an accidental murder which results. The struggle between the brothers is never more intense than during this time when Marvin is trying to persuade the police that he is the real murderer. Saul is actually afraid of Marvin and senses in a vague way what he is trying to do. The psychologists would tell us that Saul is actually afraid of the tenderer qualities in himself which he has always managed to keep submerged. He tries to prevent Marvin's sacrifice, but is unable to do so, and Marvin eventually goes to the chair. The final scene is in Saul's cell in prison at the exact hour when Marvin is being executed. It is the strain of this final moment which breaks down Saul's resistance and opens his eyes for the first time to the forces of human love and feeling.

The gangster atmosphere and the scenes in prison, as well as the simple setting of the Holland home in the first act, all convey unusual power and authenticity—so much so, that the rather artificial idea of trying to blend two men into one character obstructs neither the action nor the interest. The structural difficulty which I mentioned above is due to the fact that Marvin Holland is made far too conscious of what he is trying to do, with the result that many of his scenes are exceedingly sentimental and cloying. I believe the play would have been much stronger if Saul had been the one to see clearly what was going on and to fight against it consciously and if Marvin had been merely trying through groping instinct to bring about the change in Saul. This would have made Saul himself a more interesting character and would have prevented the rather self-conscious attitude of Marvin in so many of the scenes.

In the second act, the authors and directors resort to the not unfamiliar device of the third-degree examination of the various material witnesses. These swiftly succeeding scenes are managed by a single back-drop with a spot-light thrown against the witness chair. This enables a swift and uninterrupted tempo and brings out with particular force the drama of the two brothers, each struggling to convince the authorities of his own guilt.

Those who saw Paul Muni in "Four Walls" will remember the very great promise which he then showed. Previously, he had appeared chiefly with the Yiddish Art Theatre in New York, but it immediately became apparent that the English-speaking stage had great need of Mr. Muni's unusual qualities. He has not only amazing force and vitality, but a rich understanding and an excellent technical equipment which enables him to put infinite variety not only into the use of his fine voice, but into gesture and action. He is without question one of the few male artists to be reckoned with on the stage today. He has the power to make moments of restraint quite as impressive as the moments of strident anger or those of deep mental torture.

In the part of Marvin, Paul Guilfoyle has a rather thankless task which he does not improve by the habit of making sheep's eyes at his brother every few minutes. Granting the construction of the play as it is, it would be much better if Marvin were played in a less sentimental key and with more emphasis on the mystical insight he has into his brother's soul. Constance McKay is quietly effective as Saul's wife, and many of the minor characters are exceedingly well taken.

A special word of commendation should be reserved for Mr. Woodman Thompson's stage settings, which have a great deal to do with the immediate grip and interest that the play establishes. If the author, Mr. Sidney Buchman, had more of the real dramatic power of Eugene O'Neill in his writings and more of O'Neill's determination not to have any of his characters thoroughly conscious of what they are doing, this play might easily stand as one of the few important contributions to the stage of recent times. (At the Morosco Theatre.)

War Nurse

IN SPITE of June Walker, Robert Montgomery and several other stars, and in spite of occasional scenes of inherent dramatic intensity, this latest of the plethora of war plays merely succeeds in repeating a few of the best features of similar films and in adding many foolish and meaningless incidents. One gathers no new light on the war from detailed and excruciating scenes of hospital wards and operating rooms. Such scenes can do no good proportionate to the morbid instinct they feed. Nor do the illicit love affairs of war nurses bring any new understanding of the stress and strain of war. The fact that these latter episodes form the basis of the public advertisements of the film indicate quite clearly that they constitute a serious dilution of the sincerity with which the entire theme has been approached. (At the Astor Theatre.)

Salutation

I am not difficult to understand,
But you must learn that words are not my better part;
If you can take my silence simply, as you take my hand,
You need not doubt my heart.

WILLIAM CUMMINGS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

Educating a Soul

Education of A Princess: A Memoir, by Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia. New York: The Viking Press. $5.00.

IF I had been called upon to give a title to this remarkable book, I would have called it, The Education of a Soul, because immediately after one has perused its first pages, one comes to the conclusion that it reveals to us the evolution of a very noble mind, and of a superior intelligence, living in great times and endowed with sufficient greatness to meet them. It is not the description of her life or of the Russian Revolution, interesting though they are, which strikes the reader, but the self-education of the heroine of this Memoir. She fills the work with her brilliant personality; she shows us the heights to which human nature can rise, and she teaches us above everything else the sublime virtue of forgiveness.

This daughter of emperors, hurled through fate from a high estate into the position of having her own living to earn, has not one word of bitterness to say in regard either to fate or to individuals, having risen above it, and them, simply through her will to face her new life with sufficient faith in God to accept and submit to it. She tells us so, in one short phrase, when she describes her departure from the hospital where she had nursed during two long years, and says: "My former life lay dead behind me. The one I faced would be a fight for mere existence and an adaptation to this fight." She adapted herself to it in a marvelous way, helped by this consciousness of her real value, which is not vanity, but the feeling that no matter what happens, one can always, provided one is willing to do so, perform good in the world, and become useful to one's fellow-creatures. In this, as well as in many other things, she gives us an example which is as rare as it is beautiful.

In regard to the book itself, it is undeniably interesting, and its tone is certainly the tone of real literature, dignified and simple. To Americans its first chapters with the description of the kind of education which royal princesses of pre-war times received, will be extremely interesting. This narrow, superficial education was nevertheless a good one in many respects, because it taught discipline, self-denial and obedience, all of them things which help to strengthen the character and fortify the soul. Of course it was in many ways a revolting education, principally because it kept royal children so far from real life and its attendant struggles and miseries; so lonely among the golden splendor which surrounded them. The hollowness, emptiness and dreariness of it are very well described by the grand duchess, and it certainly is to her honor that even before the collapse of her country and of her dynasty, she had recognized this fact, and tried to build for herself an existence filled with real interests. This was by no means easy, but she did it, and in a certain way this attempt at intellectual and moral freedom, which was bitterly condemned in her, prepared her for the terrible events she had to face later on.

Her account of a royal courtship and the way in which her first marriage with Prince William of Sweden was arranged, is amazing, and makes one wonder how anyone could have expected two people brought together under such peculiar circumstances to be happy. A union contracted under such conditions was bound to go on the rocks, which it promptly did.

One of the impressions left on the reader of this book, is that what the grand duchess had lacked most in her early life, had been real love and affection, the love and affection of the mother who had died while she was an infant in arms. Had she known it, her entire life would have been different, but then perhaps it would not have been so nobly eventful.

The story of the Russian Revolution can be studied in her account of it more easily than in any other book of memoirs dealing with it, already published. We can see how it had been preparing itself almost from the day following the accession of Nicholas II, how it first burst out after the reverses of the Russo-Japanese War, and was really never repressed, but kept on smoldering until the disasters of the world struggle that began in 1914 had convinced Russia that the Romanovs had served their time, and could no longer head it, as they had done in days gone by. The description which the grand duchess gives us of the murder of her uncle, the Grand Duke Serge, by anarchists, is among the most pathetic pages of her pathetic book, as well as those in which she relates to us her sojourn in Pskov where she was at the head of a base hospital, the abdication of the emperor, and the subsequent demoralization which seized hold of the Russian people as well as of the Russian army. And speaking of it, she makes another of these remarks which reveal an entire situation, when she says that it had become futile for the new government that had succeeded to the czarist régime to try and keep faith with the Allies and go on with the war, because "the country was in the power of soldiers under arms. There were several millions of them, and they did not want to fight."

This sums up the entire Russian Revolution. The army did not want to fight. It had lost its faith in victory, and was ready for every change. The upheaval was simply this natural revolt of every human being against death, which is one of the most powerful factors in great historical events. The grand duchess recognizes it, and she accepts it with Christian humility.

Her book is altogether remarkable, and will undoubtedly rank among the prominent publications of the year.

CATHERINE RADZIWILL.

The Church and the World

Catholic World Atlas; prepared by F. C. Streit. New York: Society for the Propagation of the Faith. $12.50.

PERHAPS no more impressive vision of the visible work of the Catholic Church throughout the world has ever been presented than in this atlas. It is in itself one of the clearest proofs of the tremendous renewal of Catholic activity since the war, which fact has been one of the most remarkable of post-war social phenomena. Prepared by command of the Pope by F. C. Streit, for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, this monumental volume contains a geographical and statistical description, illustrated with many maps, of the Catholic Church, with historical and ethnographical notices of the chief parts of the world in which the Church is active. In form it is a folio volume containing beautifully printed maps covering the whole world with the sole exception of Siberia. In regard to this omission the editor of the atlas explains that the status of the Catholic Church there is at present of but little appreciable significance.

As a basis for the maps used, the territorial plates of the Sohr-Berghaus Atlas, recently edited by Dr. Alois Bludau, were used. These had themselves been newly prepared, with all the painstaking accuracy of German geographical science, in accordance with the latest information obtainable, and possessed the additional advantage of being drawn to absolutely uniform scales and with identical projections throughout. Upon these basic maps have been traced the jurisdictional territories of the Church. As the user of the atlas turns over these beautiful

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plates, he cannot help but appreciate, as no books possibly could make him do, the marvelous way in which the universal organization of the Catholic religion covers the world with its network of spiritual, moral and educational centers of authority, and institutions of all sorts and kinds, from the Vatican City in Rome down to seminaries and mission stations in the remotest parts of China, Africa and America.

More than forty symbols are employed in tracing the meshes of the mighty net of Peter, spread now almost from pole to pole and around the circumference of the earth. Only a few of these, ten in all, have to do with purely geographical or political or civic things. For example, poltical boundaries are traced with a certain type of black and red line, railways with a thin red line, and cities and towns, ranging from those with less than ten thousand inhabitants up to those with a million or more inhabitants, have their special signs. All the other signs designate the operations of the Church. One represents the residence of an archbishop in an ecclesiastical province, another the residence of a bishop; two others denote either the residence of an archbishop or that of a bishop in a territory directly subject to the Holy See; while four others stand for the residence of an archbishop or a bishop or a vicar apostolic or a prefect apostolic in territories subject to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda. Then there are the signs which denote: a theological seminary, or a preparatory seminary; a college of theology; various types of schools, universities and lyceums; the residence of an apostolic delegate, an administrator, a patriarch, an abbot, or the general of a religious order; houses for priests, or for nuns, or hospitals in the mission districts; and the places of pilgrimage throughout the world.

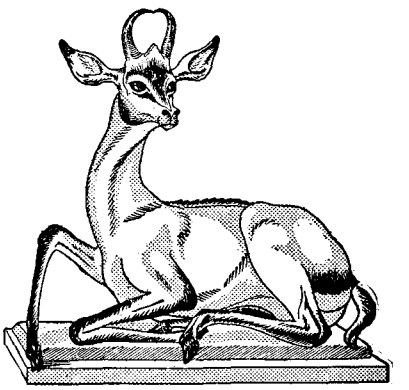
Even so, a vast number of institutions necessarily are omitted. The compiler of the atlas states that it was his intention to indicate all the religious orders and congregations of women in order to show their place graphically in the life of the Church. "But anyone who has had occasion to make a study of this question," he says in his preface, "will realize how utterly impossible it is to give even an approximately accurate survey here. On the one hand, the congregations of women are exceedingly numerous, frequently bearing the same or a very similar name; often it is impossible to ascertain whether there is question of an independent congregation or merely a branch of a larger community."

In the explanatory text which precedes the maps, a condensed mass of invaluable information is supplied in regard to each country of the world. This includes geographical, historical and statistical information, all of which bears upon the work of the Church. Political geography has been "taken into consideration only in so far as it appeared desirable or necessary for the complete mapping of all that it was the intention to set forth." Railroads, for example, are shown only because they are of importance in considering mission problems, and questions of communication between various centers of Catholic action. Mountains are indicated simply because they are important in the study of the disposition of mission territories. It is also useful for the workers of the Church to be acquainted with "the racial significance of localities where stations are established," and for this reason the maps of the mission lands contain the tribal designations of the peoples among whom the missionaries labor.

Thus, the spiritual kingdom of Christ, made concrete and visible in space, is mapped as it is not possible to do in the case of the mightiest of nations or empires. Greater than all, yet it includes them all.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS.

B. ALTMAN & CO.
Fifth Avenue at Thirty-Fourth Street
Telephone: MURray Hill 7000



Gift Suggestions
Bridge Prizes

In
Treasure Trove

An enchanting gift cache filled with treasures from the two hemispheres . . . art objects . . . picturesque items for decoration.

PORCELAINS — Beautiful vases and urns, dainty figurines, charming cigarette and bon bon boxes.

BRONZES — Animals, statuettes, bookends, cigarette boxes and ash trays.

TOLE TRAYS — A useful and highly decorative assortment . . . $6.50 to $24.50

*

TREASURE TROVE
SEVENTH FLOOR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEXT WEEK

With nations and social systems, not to speak of political parties, clashing and gnashing their teeth at each other, it is high time for THE BASIS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING, by A. Lugan. A distinguished writer, the Abbé Lugan envisages the entire panorama of the divisions between men at the present and reaches a conclusion that is at once convincing and immediately practicable by everyone. . . . GOLDSMITH, THE ESSAYIST, by Padraic Colum, has the literary subject and literary flavor that makes the reading of it an elevating as well as a delightful pastime. There are some excellent reflections in it for our times on the humble, the poor and the imprisoned, and on courageous cheerfulness. . . . THE FICTION OF WRITING, by Frederic Thompson, while admitting the possibilities of miracles, tells without breaking into sobs how hard it is for unknown writers to earn board or lodging by their heart's desire. . . . Oliver McKee, jr., is a writer with at once a lively style and a fund of sound information. His POLITICAL MARCH OF THE VETERANS is informed and provocative. It is interesting to read of what ex-service men have done in our politics, and also to consider the probabilities the writer points out that by 1936 a World War veteran will sit in the White House, and by 1940 one-third or more of the representatives in both branches of Congress will be veterans. . . . NOW FADES THE GLIMMERING LANDSCAPE ON THE SIGHT, by Sister Eugenia, is a most touching elegy in prose. "A little vestibule of Heaven," she aptly calls the convent cemetery where she walks, scattering little prayers as she goes. More than charming, the paper has grace in every sense of the word. . . . ST. AUGUSTINE UNEDITED, that we promised for this week, has been held over to complete an issue that we feel sure you will very much enjoy.

A Poet Looks Backward

Selected Poems, by William Alexander Percy. New Haven: Yale University Press. $3.00.

EVEN a cursory glance at Mr. Percy's poetry, which here includes fifteen years' work, will reveal that he has made no compromise with modern forms of poetic expression. Instead he has irrevocably looked to the nineteenth century for his masters. Prominently among these are Byron, Keats and Longfellow. It is in Mr. Percy's choice of subject that he reveals his kinship with the American poet whereas his treatment leans more heavily on Byron and Keats. Through Byron he has seen the middle ages and where he has not been heroic, Keats has been his guide. In 1915 Mr. Percy first published his Sappho in Levkas, which was followed in 1920 by In April Once, and in 1924 by Enzio's Kingdom. Viewed as a whole, one wonders at his imperviousness to the influences of those around him. Certainly any acceptance of modern fashions in poetry would have rid him in his first book of the use of such outmoded words as "methinks", " 'gainst" and those ending in an accented "ed." Yet he has refused any departure from the classical norm and one must admire the courage of his determination even if that determination has not been tempered with discreet selectiveness.

This is not to say that Mr. Percy has fallen into unoriginality. Instead his own personality has been imprinted on the greater body of his verse, but nowhere more effectively than in the sonnet sequence which is among his newer poems. It is here that his sureness of himself and his philosophy falls from him and he is aimlessly tossed on a sea of beauty. In beauty he has sought all the recompenses of body and soul. If he has deceived himself about his own happiness, many of his readers will hear Thompson's Hound of Heaven hot on another pursuit. There is indeed a definite Catholicity about much of Mr. Percy's work.

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI.

A South American Hero

José Antonio Paez, by R. B. Cunninghame Graham. Philadelphia: MacRae Smith Company. $5.00.

CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM is described as "one of the most provocative literary figures in England . . . admired by such diverse minds as Shaw, Conrad, Max Beerbohm and W. H. Hudson." No doubt his utter fearlessness makes strong appeal to Shaw and his unwillingness to be prejudiced, when he recognizes prejudice. His clarity and gift of description would call to the kindred gift in Conrad. His sympathetic insight into the varied aspects of South American character would be recognized by Hudson, still *facile princeps* in that field among writers in our tongue.

His hero, José Antonio Paez, "the cowboy, who created a nation," is more than the hero of a struggle for independence; he is a symbol of one of the reasons which caused the revolt against Spain and which still affects Latin-American revolution up to this day.

The plainsman of Latin America, like the backwoodsman of North America, made war not so much on a government as for independence from any government. They both feared government whether from a metropolis overseas or one established at home by their own efforts. When government irked the plainsman, he took his lance and horse and fought about it, never quite certain whom he fought.

Such personal revolution is obsolete, although many of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

old types are not yet aware of it. It is becoming increasingly difficult to gallop half across a continent with a few hundred horsemen, lance in rest, charging, stampeding away, rallying and wearing down organized troopers to defeat. Revolution today has become civil war, fought with gas and high explosives and from the air; it is frightfully expensive and to be successful must be highly organized and efficient.

Paez grew up a plainsman in the high tributary valleys of the Orinoco where men may still hide themselves from the whole world. Nowhere in the Spanish Empire in America did government pay less attention to governing. From this lonely, ruthless corner of the empire Paez went out to the uprising. Venezuela owes its creation more to him than to any other of the great group of liberators; and not independence merely from a Spain not greatly interested in that region, but independence also from other stronger states growing up out of the broken pieces of the empire. He held the winning cards in the gamble which established the new republic and was cast out by Venezuela after two presidencies, when Venezuelans realized that in breaking a theoretical Spanish government overseas, they had only succeeded in establishing actual government at home. Independence still means absence of government to the plainsman.

The story is worth telling and the book timely as well as worth reading. The only blot on it is the one put there by the proof-reader. It would seem that copy-readers are no longer expected to know how to read or to spell.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

Portrait of a Statesman

William Howard Taft, by Herbert S. Duffy. New York: Minton, Balch and Company. $5.00.

MR. DUFFY'S critical biography of Mr. Taft is a scholarly, well-written, valuable book about one of the three or four greatest of modern Americans. Solicitor-General of the United States, courageous judge in massive labor problems that might well have appalled the bravest, organizer of the strange new imperial government in the Philippines, brilliant statesmen in adjudicating the question of the Friar's Lands, lawgiver in the islands and beloved and successful Governor-General there, diplomatic missionary at a critical moment to Cuba, pourer of oil on the troubled waters of the Panama Canal, the only American to serve his country in the two highest offices of Presidency and Chief Justiceship, idol during his public years of all Americans save politicians—this is a mammoth record for a mammoth man!

With little biographical data but a masterly evaluation of every important moment in this great life, Mr. Herbert S. Duffy, a Cleveland lawyer, has painted a portrait that will undoubtedly survive whatever larger authorized biographies may succeed this unofficial one. The impression very properly left by Mr. Duffy is of a superman of judicial genius, of absolutely incorruptible character and even-handed justice, and of singularly winning character. Mr. Duffy himself manifests many of these high qualities in this work: he is worthy to write of Mr. Taft and is in all details fair and magisterial. Naturally in the Roosevelt controversy his sympathies are with his subject: probably most people will say they are rightly placed.

A complete biography of Mr. Taft with a discussion of all the big moments and big problems would require four bulky volumes such as Beveridge gave to Chief Justice Marshall. This sturdy, substantial and readable volume is an amazingly good substitute till the other comes.

JOHN CAVANAUGH.

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY CONFERENCES

at Fordham University Church
190th Street and Third Avenue

FALL SESSION

"THE MODERN CRISIS IN MORALS AND MARRIAGE"

By REV. IGNATIUS W. COX, S.J.
Professor of Philosophy, Fordham University

Sunday, Nov. 2, 1930: "The Revolt Against Morals and Marriage."
Sunday, Nov. 9, 1930: "Reason and Nature Make Answer."
Sunday, Nov. 16, 1930: "Contrasts and Conclusions."

"THE KING OF KINGS"

By REV. J. TRACY LANGAN, S.J.
Professor of Philosophy, Fordham University

A progressive study of the life and doctrine of Christ for the purpose of establishing His right to the unrestricted leadership of human society.

Sunday, Nov. 23, 1930: "Light of the World."
Sunday, Nov. 30, 1930: "Son of Mary and Son of God."
Sunday, Dec. 7, 1930: "Redeemer and King."

Conferences at 4 p. m.

Before the conferences an organ recital will be given beginning at 3:45 P. M.

During the services the Vested Choir of the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola will render a special program.

Invitations obtainable at the University Offices:
190th Street and Third Avenue, Bronx, N. Y.
Woolworth Building, 233 Broadway, New York City

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PIUS X SCHOOL OF LITURGICAL MUSIC
COLLEGE OF THE SACRED HEART
133rd Street and Convent Avenue, New York

Justine Ward Method, Courses I, II, III, IV
Gregorian Chant (Music IV)
Gregorian Accompaniment
Liturgical Singing and Choir Conducting
Theory, Ear Training, Sight Reading Melody, Writing
Harmony I, II—Counterpoint I, II
Polyphony—Boy Choir—Musical Appreciation
Methods and Principles of Teaching Applied to Music
Vocal Production—Organ—Violin—Piano

Victor Records of Gregorian Chants
Pius X Choir conducted by Justine Ward

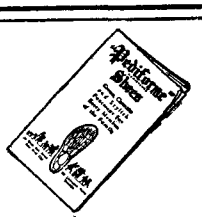
Lessons in all the above subjects privately or in class
For further information, address the Secretary—Bradhurst 8000

BETHANY HOUSE
(Conducted for Women by the Maryknoll Sisters)
DELIGHTFULLY SITUATED AMONG THE WESTCHESTER HILLS
Spacious Grounds—Modern Structure—Excellent Table and Service
Chapel—Daily Mass
Rates: $4.00 per day and Upward, Including Meals
Sr. Directress, BETHANY HOUSE, Ossining, Maryknoll, P.O., N. Y.
Tel. No. Ossining 1452

St. Hilda Guild, Inc.
CHURCH VESTMENTS, ALTAR LINEN
Ecclesiastical Embroidery
Conferences with reference to the adornment of churches
Old Embroidery Transferred
131 EAST 47th STREET NEW YORK
Vanderbilt 8761

DAUBER & PINE BOOKSHOPS, Inc.
66 Fifth Avenue at 12th Street
Largest and Choicest Stock of Good Second-hand and Out-of-Print Books on all Subjects.
Rare, Old and Curious Books.
Fine Sets, Choice Bindings, First Editions.
Americana and Autographs.
Reasonable Prices. Catalog free.
Open until 10 p. m.

FOR FEET THAT KNOW NO PAIN
Autumn days are pending,
Winds o'er dale and hill.
Get out in the open
Step out with a will.
Stay out in the sunshine
Shorter days come soon,
Walking is the best way
Well-fitting shoes a boon.
We can assure you comfort
In shoes of latest style.
Try a pair from PEDIFORME.
No trouble then to smile.



Stop in at our nearest store and inspect our attractive new models. Write for our FREE Style Book "K" that tells how to overcome foot ills in the natural way.

THE PEDIFORME SHOE COMPANY
36 W. 36 St. New York 2474 Morris Ave. Bronx 29 Washington Pl. East Orange, N. J. 322 Livingston St. Brooklyn
275 North Avenue, New Rochelle, N. Y.

Unimpassioned Purity

This Pure Young Man, by Irving Fineman. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $2.00.

THIS $7,500 prize-winning novel depicts the refusal of an un-flaming youth to be ignited. Throughout college days and thereafter he has a series of psychic and physical repulsions from the weak women and strong liquors that his friends are hinted ominously to be enjoying offstage. His escapes, where his friends are indulging in escapades, are motivated by no high moral purpose other than a desire to get on with his studies and be a successful architect. There is no appreciable drama or development of character, as the character's hot and cold repulsions are never rationalized. This may be realism of a sort, but it is of a sort that is a waste of time.

Any implication that the book may make of the universality of the experience of its hero, we can measure only by our own observation. And this has certainly been that those young men we knew as undergraduates who were steadfastly decent, have worn much better in the struggle of life, from a material viewpoint, than those who with an undergraduate connotation of contempt were known as sports. This of course does not deny the possibility of Mr. Fineman's experience, or that of his hero, but we can only say that he was unfortunate, rather than exceptionally pure. The whole story is an example of the moral chaos and helplessness of lives unpolarized by faith.

As the commentators on Verlaine and Baudelaire and Huysman have so often pointed out, there can be no great, or scarlet, sinning without faith and deliberate intention. There is no contrast, no emotionally exciting tragedy, but only the tragedy of futility, of drabness, of unimportance. This note that is characteristic of so much of our American literature, is of course traceable to the large number of third generation Protestants in America who have reached the end of protest in the complete sterilization of any faith.

FREDERIC THOMPSON.

A Notable Novel

Robert Peckham, by Maurice Baring. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Incorporated. $2.50.

MAURICE BARING may have written more elaborate novels than this but he has never written one more tender or sincere. Moreover he has succeeded to an extraordinary degree in giving the impression that the book is a veritable autobiography. Both the style of writing and the content are informed with the spirit of the sixteenth century, and never once does the author intrude himself or even allow the slightest suspicion to arise that he is one of our contemporaries.

This simple story of the scion of an English noble house, who unhappily married remains true to his wife, and at her death is robbed of happiness with the woman he loves and who loves him, and who unable to worship as a Catholic in his own land leaves it for exile and final death in Rome, has a resignation and humbleness of spirit utterly alien to our dynamic age. It is a book which will not please certain types of Catholics, as there is little in it of the Church militant. Though written in the spirit of faith in the spiritual life, it is the product of an intellect disillusioned as to its triumph in this world. Robert Peckham is certainly not composed as propaganda, yet it is one of the most moving Catholic novels of the last few years. It is a book which, in addition to admirable writing, has those rarest of virtues, charity and humbleness of spirit.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Briefer Mention

I Am Jonathan Scrivener, by Claude Houghton. New York: Simon and Schuster. $1.00.

IF ONE departs from the customary usage of a phrase, the publisher's characterization of "I Am Jonathan Scrivener" as a mystery story is justified. But the mystery of Jonathan Scrivener is not the mystery of crime and its detection. Rather is it the mystery of the mystical. And by the same token the book eludes accurate criticism for it may mean something different to each one of its readers. Who and what is Jonathan Scrivener? In the answer to this question, the question which haunts the chief characters as well as the reader, and which Mr. Houghton has cleverly left unanswered, lie both the mystery and the novel's fascinating force. The story is told in the first person by James Wrexham, employed as nominal secretary to Jonathan Scrivener, with the immediate assignment of cataloguing the books in his library until he returns from an unexplained visit to the Continent. Wrexham has never met his employer, who is obviously a man of wealth and of a remarkable catholicity in books and friends. These latter include: Pauline Mandeville, on the threshold of indecisive youth and idealism; Francesca Bellamy, wealthy, notorious, avid of power; Anthony Rivers, social climber; and Andrew Middleton, a misfit through war experience. Each of these diverse characters is facing a crisis from which must come admitted failure or the fulness of the meaning of life. They have nothing else in common except an unshakable belief in Jonathan Scrivener, confident that upon his return he will help them, yet each has a totally different impression of him. He is to men what they seek in him—the sympathetic friend, the counselor, the consoler, the judge. Such a quality cannot escape the characterization of godlike. In him is vested complete confidence, and yet he is not understood. The book will have an appeal which is extremely rare in current fiction.

Hansel the Gander, by Katharine Kuebler. New York: William Morrow and Company. $2.00.

IT IS hard to imagine a child who would not be enchanted by this account of the life and works of the smartest gander in Bavaria. The author writes simply, but with that tact in approaching the childish mind which keeps her from any tendency either to quaintness—dread word!—or to talking down. Her full attention is upon her story. As a result, the uncomplicated but interesting adventures of the dutiful, pigtailed Elsa and her waddling white pet emerge with that effect of concrete reality and importance that is the whole success of narratives directed at children, whether they be spoken or written down. The illustrations, by Ilse Bischoff, are as fresh and vivid and gay as the text.

Mountains Are Free, by Julia Davis Adams. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. $2.50.

THERE is an art in writing successful books for juveniles, and Mrs. Adams possesses it. She never "talks down" to her reader nor are her pills of learning covered with sweetness. Here is the story of William Tell and the Switzerland of his day, told in a straightforward, dramatic manner which is concerned with the historical background only where it advances the narrative. The intelligent youngster will like Mountains Are Free, and perhaps many parents will also read it as an antidote to much of our modern fiction.

RECOGNIZED BY THE CHURCH AS AUTHORITATIVE!

Now...on Victor Records!

GREGORIAN CHANTS

The late Dom Mocquereau

Sung by

The MONKS of SOLESMES

by "Dom Mocquereau's Method"

under the direction of the Dom Mocquereau's successor,

Dom F. Gajard, O. S. B.

EVERY choirmaster... every Catholic should hear this wonderful new recording over and over. It is an event of prime importance in the propaganda of the Gregorian Chant, that supreme contribution of the Church to the world's music.

It was to the Benedictines of Solesmes, whose many years of research have made their Abbey the fountainhead of authority on "the proper chant of the Roman Church", that Pope Pius X entrusted the preparation of the official edition. These Victor Records were recorded by the Schola of Solesmes under the direction of the present Choirmaster, pupil and successor of the world-renowned Dom Mocquereau at Solesmes. Here is Gregorian Chant in all its variety—in its purest, finest form.

It is impossible to describe the beauty and nobility of this great music. It appeals to what is highest in the soul. "More light on chant work is obtained from hearing one of these records than from reading pages of written instructions."

Ask at your Victor dealer's for Victor Album M-87, with explanatory booklet written by Dom Gajard. Two volumes, each of 12 double-face Victor Records. List price per volume, $12.

VICTOR DIVISION

RCA VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.

Camden, N. J.

NEWMAN SCHOOL

Lakewood—New Jersey

Prepares boys for all leading colleges and universities. Upper and Lower School. Directed by Catholic laymen. Resident Chaplain.

For Information Address

W. GRIFFIN KELLEY, *Headmaster*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE IRISH SHOP

GIFTS DIRECT FROM IRELAND

Belleek China—Hand Embroidered Linens—Irish Laces—All Wool Auto or Steamer Robes—Irish Poplin Ties—Kapp & Peterson's Smoking Pipes—Homespuns—Tweeds—Men's Wool Hose

—Irish Books—Prints—Cuala Press Cards for Christmas

—*We aim to have in stock all Irish Publications*—

Catalogues on application—Open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

THE IRISH INDUSTRIES DEPOT, INC.
780 Lexington Ave., N. Y. C. Near 60th St.

"THE UNIVERSE"

Founded December 8, 1860

Please note specially FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5 will be our Xmas number
It will also be
OUR 70 YEARS' JUBILEE NUMBER

The issue will be doubled and we shall give with it a beautiful color photogravure picture of Leonardo da Vinci's "VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS" in the National Gallery, London.

Three dollars a year—52 issues by mail

Send three dollars (or a check) to:—

The Manager, "THE UNIVERSE"
1, Arundel Street LONDON, W.C. 2.

MOUNT SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE
FOR WOMEN
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
A Standard Catholic College, Conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.
Bulletin sent on request

IRISH HAMS and BACON
Hungarian Salami
German Frankfurters
Westphalian Hams
M. H. GREENEBAUM, Inc.
220 GREENWICH STREET NEW YORK

BURR PRINTING HOUSE
FOUNDED 1837
FRANKFORT AND JACOB STREETS
NEW YORK, N. Y.
CATALOGUES, MAGAZINES, BOOKS AND COMMERCIAL PRINTING

Miss Mole, by E. H. Young. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.00.

CHESTERTON once wrote that there was no greater adventure in the world than to climb down a chimney and take up life with the family who owns it. Miss Hannah Mole does not make so startling an entrance into the household of Robert Corder, but the effect is the same. Employed as a housekeeper, she is as strange to the Corder ménage as any visitor via the chimney. The author has woven an absorbing drama of the minutiae of everyday life—a party dress, an exchanged mattress, brandy in the plum pudding, a day off in the country, chance encounters on the street, calls and callers. These are made focal points of impelling interest in this story of life in an English provincial town. Through it moves the middle-aged heroine, gay, gallant, keenly observant, tactful when she has a sharp and witty tongue under control, sympathetic and understanding, capable, even drab in appearance, but blessed with a perennial hope that just around the corner will be a miracle transforming her life into the thing of beauty she dared dreamed it could be. Only an artist could have acquired the deftness and graciousness necessary to lift such a novel into its present sparkling humor and zestful life. And only an artist could have made Miss Mole's miracle seem so natural.

A Commentary on the Cult of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, by the Reverend Myron Zalitach. New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons. $1.50.

THE youth of the country provide 54 percent of the suicides in a given year, but at the same time, throughout the land, at least twice as many youths bend their heads and assume the responsibilities, the sacrifices and the joys of Catholic priesthood. What a graphic comment this is on the serving of God in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist! Father Zalitach's book is an answer to all those who, without the grace of faith, fail to understand the real and practical importance, the wordly importance, of the Church's sacramental mysteries. We cannot hope that many of these will read the book, still we can rejoice for everyone that does, for surely every such one will thenceforth have new light. And we are very sure that anyone who starts the book, will not give it up, it is written so clearly, so logically and so interestingly. Father Zalitach has been eight years in the making of it, yet the book is small. It is the essence of the matter. The Catholic reader will find this little book a gem beautifully reflecting its divine inspiration.

CONTRIBUTORS

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL, poet, reviewer and essayist, is the author of Jealous of Dead Leaves.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT, author and critic, was formerly associated with Kent School, Kent, Connecticut.

DAVID MORTON is associated with the English department of Amherst College, and is the author of The Sonnet.

HARVEY WICKHAM, an American journalist and novelist now residing in Rome, is the author of The Unrealist; The Impuritans; and other books.

LOUISE OWEN is an essayist, poet and writer of short stories.

JAMES J. WALSH, writer and lecturer, is the author of The Thirteenth, the Greatest of Centuries; and other books.

WILLIAM CUMMINGS is the author of two novels: An Island Chronicle; and Passion and Glory.

PRINCESS CATHERINE RADZIWILL of Russia is the author in English of They Knew the Washingtons; and The Intimate Life of the Last Tzarina.

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI is on THE COMMONWEAL staff of reviewers.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS, formerly in the diplomatic service, is an authority on international affairs.

REV. JOHN CAVANAUGH, S.C.S., was formerly president of Notre Dame University.

GRENVILLE VERNON is the author of The Image in the Path.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED